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### The Lost Landscapes and Interiorscapes of the Eighteenth-Century Estate: Reconstructing Wanstead House and its Grounds

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Version: Public Version

**Citation: Armstrong, Hannah (2017) The Lost Landscapes and Interiorscapes of the Eighteenth-Century Estate: Reconstructing Wanstead House and its Grounds. [Thesis] (Unpublished)**

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**The Lost Landscapes and Interiorscapes of the  
Eighteenth-Century Estate:**

**Reconstructing Wanstead House and its Grounds**

In Two Volumes

Volume One: Text

**Hannah Armstrong**

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College,  
University of London

Department of History of Art

July 2016

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the AHRC for awarding me with the grant to undertake this thesis and the University of Glasgow and Birkbeck College London for supporting my studies. The London Art Historical Society provided me with valuable funding which allowed me to make a visit to Paris towards the end of my studies to view valuable archive material.

Thank you to my advisor Patrizia di Bello and her contribution to my upgrade, which helped me prepare for the next stage of my research. Special thanks to John Bonehill for his support and encouragement during the early stages of my research, without which, I may not have embarked on this project. Thank you for agreeing to take part at my upgrade and providing such valuable advice. I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor Kate Retford. Our meetings were a constant source of inspiration, learning and support in the most challenging times. It has been such a pleasure and I feel privileged to have had your guidance. Thank you for everything.

Many people have assisted me over the last three and a half years. First and foremost, the Friends of Wanstead Park, in particular, thanks to Richard Arnopp, who was happy to share his knowledge of all things Wanstead and always ready to answer my questions. Thanks also to Ralph Porter, Sally Jeffery, Geraldine Roberts and Greg Roberts. Tim Couzens has undertaken extensive research on the Tylney Long family and the whereabouts of the Wanstead sale items. Thank you for being so kind and helpful throughout. Thanks also to Bryan Maggs at Sir Paul Getty's Library, Pamela Kingsbury at

Hoares Bank Archive, staff at Essex Record Office, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Redbridge Central Library, British Library, John Harris and Anthony Tavernor.

I was fortunate to visit Wanstead Park with Compass Archaeology early in my research. Thank you for helping me to establish a valuable understanding of the current Wanstead landscape. Thanks also to Rob Wiseman for sharing his fascinating archaeological scans of Wanstead.

Justin Vanson's efforts to digitally recreate Wanstead House was inspiring. Thank you for all your hard work and for helping me realise future avenues. Amelia Smith, my country house companion. I wish you the very best for your future adventures. Nadia Marx – one of the most positive outcomes of my PhD experience was finding a friend for life in you. I would never have survived the days on end in the British Library without you. To Marie, Matthew and Joseph for being the greatest siblings a person could wish for. To my dearest friend, Tim Vanson - a shining light throughout, thank you for your boundless support, love and encouragement. Finally, to my parents Moira and Brendan Armstrong, it is because of you that Wanstead holds a special place in my heart. Without you, this would never have been and so I dedicate this thesis to you both.

## **Abstract**

Wanstead House was built by Colen Campbell between 1713-20 for Richard Child, later Viscount Castlemaine and 1st Earl Tylney. The house, furnished by leading designer of the Georgian period, William Kent, was recognized as one of the ‘noblest houses in Europe’ and displayed the same level of opulence as major seats such as Chatsworth or Houghton, but within the peripheries of London. The Wanstead landscape was created by important designers George London and Henry Wise, Charles Bridgeman, William Kent and Humphry Repton. However, in June 1822, the entire contents of Wanstead was sold in order to settle significant debts accumulated by its owners, William and Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley. Two years later, the house was demolished, and the building material was sold.

Due to its demolition and the decline of its landscape, Wanstead is a major loss to academic studies of the eighteenth-century estate. This thesis draws on a broad range of widely dispersed material evidence to present a much-needed chronological history of Wanstead. It seeks to ‘animate’ the property, fully considering it as a lived space, and as a mutable environment, in the constant process of development. Other themes of this thesis include social status and the country house, estate management, and the significance of geographical location.

The introduction provides an account of the 1822 Wanstead sale and outlines the historiography and methodology. Due to the nature of the dispersed

evidence, the methodological discussion is necessarily detailed, addressing the challenges and importance of cross-examining material for this study of a lost house. Chapter one examines Josiah Child's acquisition of Wanstead, and how he laid the foundations for the estate's future glory. Chapters two and three address improvements carried out by Richard Child between 1704 and 1750. Chapter four is a study of the ownerships of the second half of the eighteenth century. The conclusion returns to the Wanstead sale, evaluating the impact of Wanstead's loss and assessing how the study of such a lost house can contribute to our understanding of eighteenth-century estates more broadly.

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**Bt. Sir Josiah Child**  
**(c.1630 -1699)**

m.1654 Hannah Boate d.1663

Elizabeth Child b.1656

m.1664 Mary Stone *ne.* Atwood wid. of Thomas Stone, merchant, of  
London

2d.

1. Rebecca Child  
(1662-1712)

2. daughter

1s. Josiah Child  
c.1668-1704

m. 10 Mar. 1691, Elizabeth (*d.* 1741), da. of  
Sir Thomas Cooke\*, *s.p.* Kntd. 29 Oct. 1692;  
*suc.* fa. as 2nd Bt. 22 June 1699

m. 1676, Emma, da. and coh. of Sir Henry Barnard, merchant, of  
London and Bridgnorth, Salop, wid. of Francis Willoughby of  
Middleton d.1725.

2.S

1. Barnard Child b.1677-d.  
1698

2. **Richard Child**  
**b.1680-d.1750**

m. 22 Apr. 1703, Dorothy da.  
and h. of John Glynne of  
Henley Park, d.1744

**Emma Child**  
**b. 1707 – d.1758**  
**m. 1735, Sir**  
**Robert Long, 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**Bt**

Elizabeth  
Child  
b.1707-d.  
1710

Frederick  
Child  
b.  
1709-1715

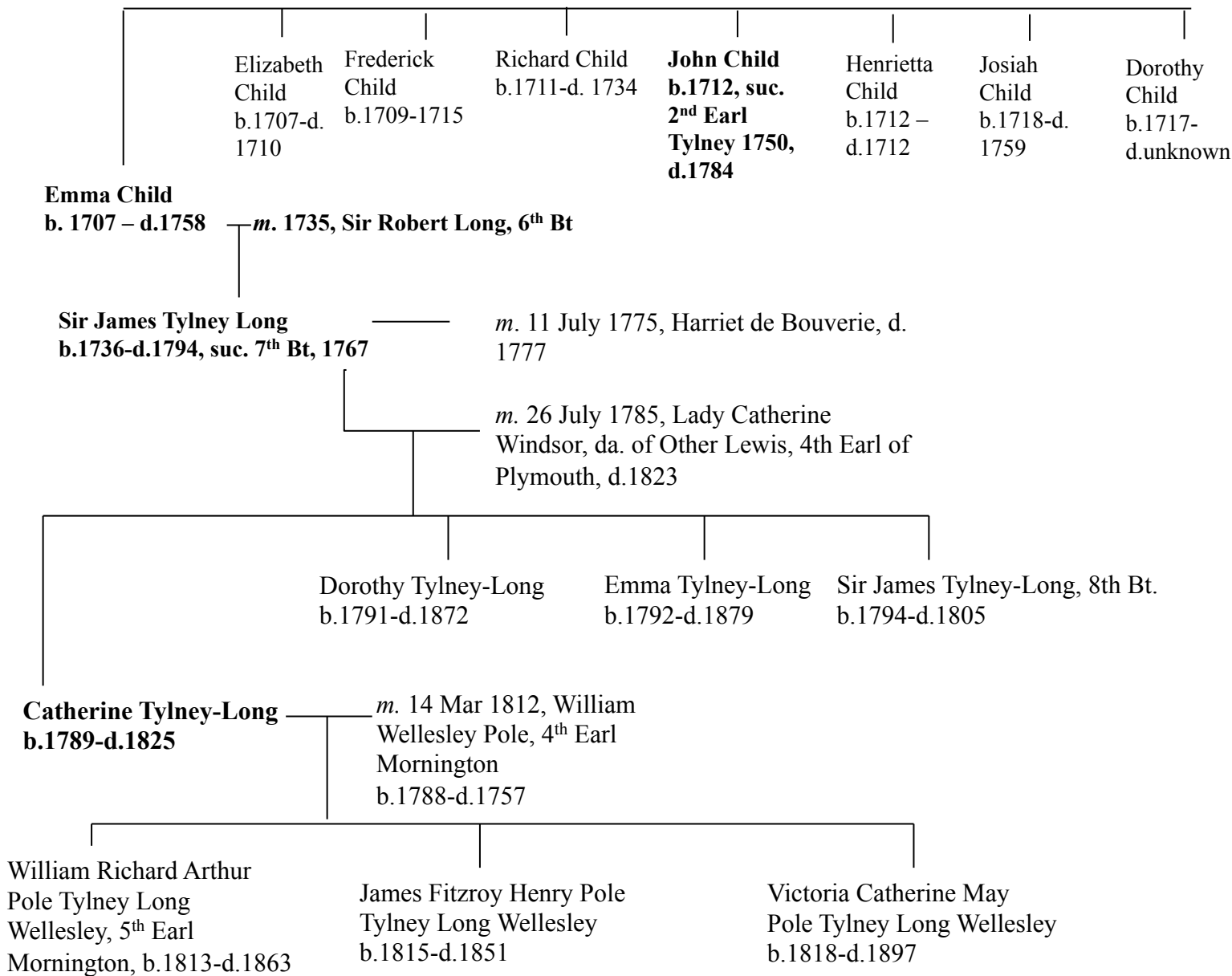
Richard Child  
b.1711-d. 1734

**John Child**  
**b.1712, suc.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Earl**  
**Tylney 1750,**  
**d.1784**

Henrietta  
Child  
b.1712 –  
d.1712

Josiah  
Child  
b.1718-d.  
1759

Dorothy  
Child  
b.1717-  
d.unknown



## Introduction

### The Wanstead House Sale: June 1822

On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1821, A.R. Blake of Lincolns Inn wrote to William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley advising possible solutions to avoid a catastrophic financial crisis that was likely to engulf Wellesley's fortunes and those of his estate of Wanstead.<sup>1</sup> William, son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Mornington and nephew to the Duke of Wellington, had acquired this 'princely mansion' and its extensive grounds ten years earlier through his marriage to Catherine Tylney Long, who had inherited it in 1805.<sup>2</sup> Catherine's family had owned Wanstead since Josiah Child, Director of the East India Company, had purchased the property in 1673.<sup>3</sup> The severity of debt facing William and Catherine in 1821 meant that Blake's primary recommendation to resolve the financial crisis was to arrange a sale of the contents of Wanstead, estimated to be worth £36,000.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Essex Record Office D/DB f116/4, A.R. Blake to William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, 27 February 1821. Hereafter ERO. William Wellesley Pole married Catherine Tylney Long, heiress to the Tylney family estates, including Wanstead estate, in 1812. Discussions of William prior to this occasion will address him by his unmarried surname 'Wellesley Pole.' After the marriage, William was to adopt his wife's surname. Discussions of William after his marriage to Catherine therefore address him as 'William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley'.

<sup>2</sup> See frontispiece for: *Wanstead House, Essex. Magnificent Furniture, Collection of Fine Paintings and Sculpture, Massive Silver and Gilt Plate, Splendid Library of Choice Books, The Valuable Cellars of Fine-Flavoured Old Wines, Ales, &c., &c.* (London, 1822). Hereafter: *Wanstead House Sale*. Catherine will be referred to as Catherine Tylney Long in discussions prior to her marriage to William Wellesley Pole. Discussions about Catherine after this period will address her by her married name, 'Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley'.

<sup>3</sup> For Wellesley see: G. Le G. Norgate, 'Pole, William Wellesley-third earl of Mornington (1763–1845)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29010](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29010), accessed 18 May 2015. Hereafter ODNB.

<sup>4</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4

The general consensus in secondary literature on Wanstead tends to overstate William and Catherine's responsibility for the estate's downfall. In fact, a significant amount of scholarship on eighteenth-century estates more broadly reveals that it was not uncommon for landowners to be heavily burdened with financial debt for several generations.<sup>5</sup> Evidence of growing financial trouble can be seen in the ledgers held at the Hoare's Bank Archive dating from as early as 1763. These note that no additional loans should be paid to John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, because he was £1,100 in debt.<sup>6</sup> However, this said, the expense of William and Catherine's refurnishing of Wanstead and landscape improvements, carried out in the early nineteenth century, combined with William's already existing personal debts, no doubt contributed significantly to the financial decline. In 1822, William and Catherine were faced with little alternative but to act upon the recommendations made, and to arrange a sale to be carried out by the auctioneer, George Henry Robins, starting on 10<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System* (Oxford, 1994); H.A Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (London, 1982), p.17; A. Mackley and R. Wilson, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (London, 2000), pp.25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Hoares Bank Archive HB/8/T/11/392, Private letter book commencing 5<sup>th</sup> March 1778, Letter to Sir James Tylney Long, 14 November 1779, pp.45-46. Hereafter HBA. Thank you to Pamela Hunter for her assistance at Hoares Bank Archive and for providing me with access to this material.

<sup>7</sup> Robins was also responsible for the sales at Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill in 1842 and of the pictures of Benjamin West in 1829. He had a reputation for using 'every trick of the trade'. He was a popular subject for satirists and was mentioned by Byron, Dickens, Thackeray, Jerrold and Thomas Hood, who moved to the Lake House at Wanstead in 1832. For further information on Robins see: R. Myers, 'Robins, George Henry (1777-1847)' ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23824](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23824), accessed 4 September 2015.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 1822, *The Morning Post* notified readers that a sales catalogue listing the impressive contents of Wanstead House was soon to be available for purchase:

MR. ROBINS, of Warwick street, Golden Square and Regent street informs the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, that he has received directions to SELL by AUCTION early in the Month of May, the Splendid and Magnificent FURNITURE of this SUPERB MANSION, together with the scarce and rare India and Buhl Cabinet, Tables, &c.; China of all descriptions. The highly valuable and very extensive Library, consisting of many thousand volumes of Books on all subjects. The superbly grand and highly furnished Services of ancient and modern Plate executed in the very best style of workmanship, and of the newest as well as antique patterns. A great Collection of Figures, of considerable celebrity; Wines, Linen and various other effects...<sup>8</sup>

The sale was advertised in various newspapers and attracted a significant amount of attention.<sup>9</sup> Robins's catalogue notified the public that Wanstead House and its grounds would be open for viewing for twenty days prior to the sale. Colonel Merrick Shawe, a close friend of William's wrote to him, commenting on the vast numbers visiting Wanstead during this period:

I went to Wanstead on Friday last but the crowd was so great that I could do nothing but give some directions for the security of the property in the House and also to protect the Gardens and Grotto from Damage. This required a reinforcement of Police officers – Robins people exerted themselves very much and no mischief was done – but we were

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<sup>8</sup> *The Morning Post* (11 March 1822), p.1.

<sup>9</sup> 'WANSTEAD HOUSE', *The Kaleidoscope: or Literary and Scientific Mirror* (9 July 1822), pp.6-7; 'WANSTEAD HOUSE', *The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* (15 June 1822), pp.379-380; 'Advertisements and Notices', *Caledonian Mercury* (1 June 1822); 'Chit-Chat', *The Kaleidoscope: or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* (24 September 1822), pp.95-96.

obliged to apply for 10 more Police men in addition to 9 already there. On Saturday the crowd was greater, but the force was sufficient to keep them in order. Mr Bertram Robin's man assured me there were 30,000 to view the House on Saturday – they were excluded from the Gardens & pleasure grounds on that day.<sup>10</sup>

Access to the sale itself was granted on the purchase of the auction catalogue for five shillings. It listed the entire contents of the house and its outer buildings. The extent of the Robins sale was such that it lasted thirty-two days.

There are many reasons why this sale generated such interest amongst the public, but two are fundamental. The first is the status of the house. Contemporaries frequently commented on the grandeur of Wanstead. In 1788, the Reverend Stebbing Shaw had described the property as 'one of the most beautiful and magnificent private houses in Europe,' and, in 1794, *The Ambulator* had called it 'one of the noblest houses, not only in England, but in Europe'.<sup>11</sup>

Wanstead House had been commissioned by Richard Child, later Viscount Castlemaine and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney (1680-1750), and designed by the Scottish architect, Colen Campbell (1676-1729), between 1713 and 1720 (figs 1-3).<sup>12</sup> The house was Campbell's first commission in England and its classical design became an influential model in country house building throughout the eighteenth

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<sup>10</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4.

<sup>11</sup> S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England* (London, 1788), p.28; *Ambulator, or, A Pocket Companion in a Tour round London* (London, 1794), p.288.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Child 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet was made Viscount Castlemaine in 1728 and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney in 1731. He will be referred to throughout this thesis as 'Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney', the title for which he was best known.

century. Its interior was furnished by one of the leading designers of the Georgian era, William Kent (1685-1748), and its landscape has been attributed to significant landscape designers: George London (d. 1714) and Henry Wise (1653-1738); Charles Bridgeman (d.1738); William Kent; and, in the early nineteenth century, Humphry Repton (1752-1818).

Second, the sale at Wanstead was an attractive destination for a large audience due to its proximity to London. Wanstead was situated only eight miles north east of the city, along the Roman road that led from London to Colchester. The easy access to and from London meant that the estate had been a popular tourist destination throughout the eighteenth century, and so, unsurprisingly, it was widely visited when word went out about its decline and the selling off of its contents.

The frontispiece of the Robins catalogue enticed prospective buyers with that promise of ‘magnificent and costly furnishings’.<sup>13</sup> Major buyers at the sale included agents for the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, who made a number of purchases for Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, and the Earl of Pembroke, who acquired items for Wilton House in Wiltshire. They also included avid collectors of French *Bouille* furniture, such as Philip John Miles and Thomas Philip Weddell, 2nd Earl Grey of Newby and Wrest Park.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, frontispiece.

<sup>14</sup> D. F Keeling, *Wanstead House and Chatsworth: treasures from Wanstead House acquired by the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire* (London, 1997); C. Cator, ‘French Furniture at Wanstead’, *Furniture History*, Vol. 43 (2007), pp.227-235.

However, it was not only the wealthy elite that attended the Wanstead sale. In his letter to William, Shawe commented that attempts made to permit access solely to ‘persons of distinction’ was challenged by a crowd that ‘burst open a gate near the Stables & made a rush in’.<sup>15</sup> The vast number of visitors eager to glimpse inside the property, out of curiosity and/or as potential buyers, were also described by *The Literary Chronicle* on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1822:

For the last three weeks, Wanstead House, with all its possessions, has been thrown open to the public, and has been the most attractive resort of the fashionable world, who have deserted the west end of the town in shoals, and made Whitechapel more travelled than Whitehall and although we grave editors are not the most likely persons in the world to be – ‘please with a feather – tickled with a straw’, yet we could not resist the curiosity of mixing for once with the nobles and gentles at Wanstead House...<sup>16</sup>

A sale at a country house was an opportunity both to acquire second-hand goods and to gaze at the belongings of the wealthy. It was also a chance to see ‘how the other half lived’. Certainly country house tourism provided regular access into the great houses of England, but this was usually a controlled experience, guided by the steward of the house and revealing only the most public and impressive spaces. As the June sale catalogue demonstrates, the Wanstead auction took place throughout the entire house, providing visitors with access into more

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<sup>15</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4.

<sup>16</sup> *The Literary Chronicle and weekly review* (15 June 1822), pp.379-380.



private and utilitarian areas where they would not usually have been permitted. It was therefore a distinct, and rare touristic opportunity.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the attention received and the number of items sold, however, the sale failed to raise the necessary funds to rescue Wanstead and a considerable number of items had to be deferred. On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September, a second sale took place, lasting over three days. Like that for the previous sale, the catalogue boasted superb Gobelin tapestries, beautiful damask and velvet hangings, a few fine paintings and costly furniture.<sup>18</sup> The arrangement of this second sale emphasises the extent of William and Catherine's financial burden. Finally, their inability to come to a resolution resulted in the demolition and selling of Wanstead's building fabric in 1824.<sup>19</sup>

Contemporary reactions to Wanstead's dismantling were mixed. *The Kaleidoscope's* response on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1822 acknowledged the significance of the estate's decline, stating that 'every vestige of its former splendour [is] dispersed', and reported on its approaching demolition. The author compared Wanstead's situation to that of Canons, the seat of 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Chandos and

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<sup>17</sup> R. MacArthur and J. Stobart, 'Going for a song? Country house sales in Georgian England', in J. Stobart and I. Van Damme (eds), *Modernity and the Second-hand Trade. European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700-1900* (Palgrave, 2010), pp. 175-95.

<sup>18</sup> Bibliotheque National France CVE 39280, *A Catalogue of the superb Gobelin tapestry, beautiful damask and velvet hangings, and other articles, of the princely mansion, Wanstead house, deferred at the late sale, together with various uncleared lots* (London, 1822). Hereafter BNF. Special thanks to Loic Le Bail for his assistance and for providing me with access to this material.

<sup>19</sup> For details of the sale of the house and its architectural fabric see: A.P Baggs, 'The after-life of Wanstead', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. VI (1996), pp.131-133; N. Pevsner and S. Bradley ed., *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (London and New Haven, 2014), p.327.

Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney's half sister Cassandra Brydges, which had been demolished in 1747, stating: 'Sic transit gloria mundi'; 'thus passes the glory of the world'.<sup>20</sup> Satirist Isaac Robert Cruickshank's response to the sale of Wanstead's building fabric, in a portrayal of the event published that same month, was entitled 'THIS TRULY DESIGNED CORINTHIAN AUCTIONEER A GOING LIKE LIGHTENING THROUGH A GOOSBERRY BUSH, GONE' (fig. 4). In it, W. Simpson, the auctioneer of Wanstead's building materials, drives a fashionable two-wheel trap, with a groom seated alongside him. Behind them stands the magnificent façade of Wanstead House and a signpost pointing left to Bucklersbury [road], the site of Simpsons' auction house in London, and right to Wanstead.<sup>21</sup> A second signpost positioned alongside that for Wanstead reads: 'To be sold by auction by Mr W.W. Simpson this truly designed Corinthian portico Jun 29 1824.' Dorothy George suggested that the use of 'Corinthian' is a reference to the advertisements of the sale which stressed the Corinthian stone portico, as well as to the literary character Corinthian Tom, created by Pierce Egan in 1821, who, much like Wanstead's owners, was famous for his extravagant spending and luxurious lifestyle.<sup>22</sup>

Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley suffered tremendously in her marriage to William. Not only did he contribute significantly to the decline of her magnificent family estate, but he was also notorious for his poor behaviour

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<sup>20</sup> 'Chit-Chat', p.96.

<sup>21</sup> M.D George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Dept. of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. IX (London, 1978), p.442, no. 14699.

<sup>22</sup> George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, p.442; D. Brailsford, 'Egan, Pierce (1772–1849)', ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8577>, accessed 8 June 2015.

towards her, and his relationships with other women.<sup>23</sup> Prior to the sale of Wanstead House, William and Catherine relocated to France for a short while in order to escape any possibility of William's arrest for debt, but upon their return to England the couple soon separated.<sup>24</sup> Catherine relocated to her childhood home, Draycot Cerne in Wiltshire, where she died in 1825.<sup>25</sup> Since Catherine's death, the Wanstead estate has slowly vanished from view. A large crater at the first tee of the Wanstead golf course is all that remains to mark the spot where this impressive classical mansion once stood (fig. 5).

### Historiography

There has been considerable interest in the subject of Wanstead House amongst local historians over the last few decades, and this has resulted in the production of a number of small publications, as well as some research projects.<sup>26</sup> Simon

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<sup>23</sup> Norgate, 'Pole, William Wellesley.'

<sup>24</sup> Evidence of Catherine providing William with financial aid whilst in France can be found in correspondence now held in the ERO. See: ERO D/DB f116/4, Shawe (?) to Wellesley, 14 September 1822: 'Mrs W brought have send you a credit on the Bank of Calais for £585 and further instructions – you will receive £625 income due to you at the end of this month.'; Evidence of the couple residing in France during this period can also be found in correspondence now held in Redbridge Archives. See: Box 4, Vol. 2, Letter No. 16, Baron Maryborough to William Wellesley, 1 August 1823; Box 4, Vol. 2, Letter No. 20, Baron Maryborough to William Wellesley, 10 September 1822. William's father, William Wellesley Pole became Baron Maryborough in 1821 and was amongst the trustees responsible for sorting William's debts until 1825 when he became estranged from his son.

<sup>25</sup> 'Politics of Europe', *The Calcutta Journal, of Politics and General Literature* (21 November 1822), p.279. For further information about the relationship between William and Catherine see: G. Roberts, *The Angel and The Cad: Love, Loss and Scandal in Regency England* (London, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> O. Dawson, *The Story of Wanstead Park. 1894* (London, 1995); ERO T/P 266/27, J.E Tuffs, *The History of Wanstead: 1727-1771*, Vol. 4; G.E Tasker, 'Wanstead: Its Manor and Palace', *Essex Review*, Vol.7 (1898), pp.213-30; W. Tegg, *A Sketch of Wanstead Park, And of the House*

Adams and Elizabeth Goldring have published informative studies on Wanstead during the Elizabethan period, when the Elizabethan courtier Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, owned the property.<sup>27</sup> As will be demonstrated in chapter one, this material is valuable in setting the context for Josiah Child's acquisition of the estate in 1673. Adams's and Goldring's examination of Wanstead during the Elizabethan period also helps to establish Wanstead's original function as a royal hunting lodge and suburban site of leisure.

However, aside from these studies, academic literature on the Wanstead estate is relatively sparse. Where it does exist, it is predominantly concerned with discussions of architectural style. Many texts focus on Colen Campbell's career and the designs published for Wanstead in *Vitruvius Britannicus* between 1715 and 1725 (figs 1-3).<sup>28</sup> A key theme is Wanstead's architectural influence upon eighteenth-century country house building more broadly, and how Campbell's designs for Wanstead sowed the seeds for English Palladianism.<sup>29</sup> Whilst this assessment is persuasive, this thesis will argue that the temptation amongst architectural historians to situate Wanstead entirely within the field of English Palladianism can be problematic. I will particularly explore this in chapter two, in a discussion of Campbell's designs for Wanstead and the influence behind

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*which formerly stood there* (London, 1882); P. Lawrence, *The Rise and Fall of Wanstead House, 1667 – 1857* (London, 2008); W. Addison, *Wanstead Park* (London, 1973).

<sup>27</sup> E. Goldring, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London and New Haven, 2014); S. Adams, *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (Harmondsworth, 1983); J. Harris, *The Palladians* (London, 1981); H. Stutchbury, *The Architecture of Colen Campbell* (Manchester, 1967); H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (London, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> Harris, *Palladians*, p.16.

these works, arguing that Wanstead was, in fact, a complex synthesis of architectural styles.

Wanstead is also referred to in scholarship on the leading designer of the Georgian period, William Kent. However, although Wanstead is usually listed amongst Kent's achievements, the significance of this early commission is typically somewhat overlooked, and little attention given to Kent's employment at Wanstead more broadly. Instead, these discussions mostly refer to Wanstead House as providing examples of the kinds of designs which Kent was producing for patrons early in his career. Furthermore, their focus is largely on the ceiling painting situated in the ballroom, attributed to Kent and depicted in William Hogarth's conversation piece set in the Wanstead ballroom (fig. 6). The furniture which Kent produced for 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney has received much less attention. Chapter three of this thesis will address the extent of Kent's involvement at Wanstead, as well as exploring the significance and implications of this important commission.

Studies of the Wanstead landscape are even fewer than those concerned with the house, and are mostly in the form of articles which provide a brief overview of the chronological developments of the grounds and the designers responsible.<sup>30</sup> Sally Jeffery is the main exception to this, as she has provided a thorough account of the improvements carried out by the various owners of the estate

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<sup>30</sup> J. Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life Magazine*, Vol. 22 (22 August 1991), pp.60-61; F. Kimball and I. Dunlop, 'The Gardens of Wanstead, Essex', *Country Life Magazine* (28 July 1950), pp.294-8.

between 1673 and 1822.<sup>31</sup> She has discussed how these improvements were represented, as well as considering surviving evidence of various features in the landscape. Jeffery's account thus relies on a wide variety of material evidence in the form of paintings, maps, drawings, correspondence, visitor accounts and archaeological evidence, such as the Debois survey carried out in 1990.<sup>32</sup> As such, she has provided the most significant and informative study of the landscape to date. Jeffery also published a useful article in *Country Life Magazine*, about the collection of design proposals executed by Humphry Repton and Lewis Kennedy in the early nineteenth century. This has also proved invaluable for this thesis.<sup>33</sup>

Two archaeological reports have been produced on the condition and surviving features of the Wanstead site: the Debois Landscape Survey, mentioned above, commissioned by the City of London Corporation in 1990, and that carried out by Compass Archaeology for Historic England in January 2013.<sup>34</sup> The Debois Survey was prompted by the extensive damage caused to the park by storms in 1987 and 1990. The report was intended to plot all evidence of the eighteenth-century landscape in the park and on the golf course as a means of highlighting the history of the site, as well as in order to propose possible means of better protecting the site in the future.

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<sup>31</sup> S. Jeffery, *The Gardens of Wanstead, Proceedings of A Study Day, 1999* (London, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *Debois Landscape Survey Group* (York, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> S. Jeffery, 'How Repton saw Wanstead', *Country Life Magazine* (14 April 2005), pp.98-101.

<sup>34</sup> *Debois Landscape Survey Group*; Compass Archaeology, *Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, London Borough of Redbridge* (September 2014).

According to the Compass report, some of the conservation efforts set in motion by the earlier Debois Landscape Survey have proved effective. However, other features, such as the eighteenth-century man-made lakes, remain in a critical condition. The report by Compass Archaeology was intended to assess the heritage status of the park, the surviving landscape features as well as those in poor condition, and to use these findings to address the 'at risk' status given to the park in 2009 by Historic England.<sup>35</sup>

### Sources

Given the significance of Wanstead House, why has relatively little attention been given to this estate? Furthermore, why is it that what has been written on the subject is so fragmented, often contained within broader discussions of architectural and design history, or accounts of the designers involved? I would propose two probable reasons.

First, Wanstead House was demolished prior to the introduction of photography in Britain. In 1974, an exhibition entitled *The Destruction of the Country House*, curated by John Harris, Marcus Binney and Roy Strong, opened at the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>36</sup> During the inter-war years, interest in the English eighteenth-century country house had dwindled, due to its perceived irrelevance at a time of social disruption and economic hardship. This exhibition, however, did much to reawaken public interest in English country houses and to raise

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<sup>35</sup> Z. Mellor, 'Wanstead Park, E11, Redbridge', *Historic England Online*, <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/1314015>, accessed 15 July 2016.

<sup>36</sup> J. Harris, R. Strong and M. Binney, ed., *The Destruction of the Country House 1875-1975* (London, 1974).

awareness of lost examples. In a sense, the exhibition acted as a manifesto, calling for the protection of this heritage. However, it focused only on houses demolished during the twentieth century and, therefore, only those captured in photographs. Wanstead House, therefore, is not one of the twenty-eight demolished properties listed under 'Essex' in the catalogue.

Second, the dispersal of the evidence makes a study of Wanstead highly complex. From the outset, examination of this house and its estate requires the historian to rely on a variety of sources, in the absence of much physical or any photographic material. One has to piece together a range of sources in the form of paintings, maps, drawings, prints, architectural plans, poetry, correspondence, contemporary visitor accounts, archaeology, one inventory and two sales catalogues. The issues that each of these sources raise are complex, and each must be treated with careful consideration.

As will be demonstrated, all this material evidence has to be cross-examined in order accurately to establish its value. Furthermore, the absence of other types of sources - such as architectural proposals, correspondence discussing the construction and design of the house, or fuller representations of the interior - result in significant gaps and challenges. However, somewhat perversely, I would argue that some valuable insights can actually be obtained from the relative lack of evidence, as it forces the historian to consider Wanstead from alternative perspectives, and to adopt innovative approaches.



It is therefore important at the outset of this thesis to address the various surviving sources, the complications that arise from the use of particular types of material evidence, and to describe how they have been analysed. I will thus now outline the methodology I have applied in the course of this research on Wanstead House and its landscape.

### Archaeological

Today, the estate is divided into two parts. The site where the house and immediate gardens were situated is now occupied by the Wanstead golf course, constructed in the 1920s. The other half of the estate forms Wanstead Park, and belongs to the City of London Corporation (fig. 7).

Archaeological evidence of the estate is most easily viewed on the Wanstead golf course, where the use of the land has, to some degree, protected surviving features. For example, the length of the house can be established by measuring the length of that crater at the first tee (fig. 5). Other elements, such as the parterres and fishponds, have left traces in the form of outlines on the grass.

In addition to this evidence of the eighteenth-century estate, other archaeological features provide an insight into earlier usage of the Wanstead site. For example, the discovery of Roman terracotta tiles suggests that some sort of a villa stood on the site in that period. This also supports the findings reported in 1715 of a mosaic pavement uncovered when landscape improvements were being carried

out for Richard Child.<sup>37</sup> Evidence of ridge and furrow, a sign of medieval farming, has also been discovered on the golf course.

Most of the key features of the wider estate still exist in Wanstead Park in some form or other. Some, such as the amphitheatre and fortification islands, are obscured by overgrowth. Most visible are the avenues, including the network that led from the house down to the central canal, the grotto and the temple (fig. 8).

This archaeological evidence has been invaluable for this thesis, helping to establish whether or not landscape designs as depicted in proposals, estate views, maps and prints were in fact executed, and, if so, where they were situated within the landscape. Additional archaeological methods such as the use of Lidar scanning by Dr Rob Wiseman in 2011 has uncovered evidence that would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible to trace when studying the landscape at ground level (fig. 9).<sup>38</sup> According to Wiseman, the scans' readings are accurate within a distance of three centimetres and, given the extent of the detail that they present, they can be relied upon as a core source of evidence for the eighteenth-century landscape.

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<sup>37</sup> *Debois Landscape Survey Group*, pp.1, 10, 21. Some of these findings are now displayed in the Temple visitor centre in Wanstead Park; S. Lethieullier, 'A letter from Smart Lethieullier, Esq; to Dr Charles Lyttleton, relating to some antiquities found in the county of Essex, Read November 27, 1746', *Archaeologia: or miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity*, Vol.1 (London, 1779), p.73.

<sup>38</sup> Thanks to Compass Archaeology and Dr Rob Wiseman for sharing their archaeological findings with me.

Whilst Wiseman's findings are hugely beneficial to this research, it is the archaeological features of the Wanstead landscape which are visible to the eye that are perhaps the most compelling of the sources used in this thesis and, in a sense, provided the initial inspiration for this study. Had building works been carried out on the site during the twentieth century, the surviving - albeit ghostly - traces of the estate would have been lost, and this study of Wanstead made all the more challenging.

### Building Fabric

The demolition of Wanstead House and the sale of its architectural fabric mean that any material evidence of the building itself has been lost or dispersed. The only architectural structures which remain in situ at Wanstead are the stables, which now serve as the Wanstead golf course club house; the grotto, albeit in a dilapidated state; and the temple, which has undergone some alterations and is now used as a visitor centre for Wanstead Park (figs 10-12).

A.P. Baggs, following Nikolaus Pevsner, has drawn attention to the dispersal of Wanstead's building fabric, the largest known collection of which is now situated in a house of the same name on the Hills Road in Cambridge (fig. 13).<sup>39</sup> Other surviving fragments of Wanstead's architectural fabric include an obelisk in Loughton, Essex; fabric used for the construction of the portico at St Marks church in Myddleton Square, London and two marble chimneypieces at

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<sup>39</sup> Baggs, 'After-life of Wanstead', pp.131-133; Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, p.327.

Chillingham Castle in Northumberland, introduced in 1828 by Sir Jeffry Wyattville (fig. 14).<sup>40</sup>

These items are valuable sources, which facilitate a study of the physical components that originally made up Wanstead House. The most notable objects at the house in Cambridge include the iron balustrade banister that flanked the staircase adjoining the great hall, marble fireplaces, some elaborate cornices and the panelling of two rooms (figs 15-17), as well as other plasterwork, such as the overmantel which is depicted in an important portrait set in the Saloon by Joseph Frans Nollekens (figs 18-19).

This property in Cambridge, however, is considerably smaller than Wanstead House, greatly affecting our experience of these objects today. John Harris's study of the trade of architectural salvage emphasises that rooms in a house are governed by use and function, and that every space answers, via its windows, to the external architecture, as well as internal connections throughout the plan. Once elements are removed from these rooms, and placed in other environs, much is lost. The iconographic meaning of a dining room chimneypiece, ornamented with bunches of grapes, for example, becomes redundant if that chimneypiece is relocated.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Northumberland* (Harmondsworth, 1957), pp.125-6; N. Pevsner and B. Cherry, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North* (London, 1998), pp.604-605; Baggs, 'After-life of Wanstead', p.132.

<sup>41</sup> J. Harris, *Moving Rooms: The Trade in Architectural Salvages* (New Haven and London, 2007), p.3. See also: D. Arnold and A. Ballantyne ed., *Architecture as Experience: Radical change in spatial practice* (London and New York, 2004).

However, the survival of some elements of the building fabric of Wanstead is still of great value, particularly when studied alongside other forms of evidence. For example, as will be shown in chapter three, we can establish the authenticity of the pictorial representation of that fireplace in Nollekens's portrait by scrutinising it at the Hills Road house. Such fabric does also enable some degree of insight, albeit limited, into the sensory experiences which contemporaries would have had when encountering Wanstead House. Moving through doorways and viewing panelling, fireplaces and the wrought iron banister on the Hills Road can give us some sense of the decorative grandeur at Wanstead.

Baggs's article also provides information about the buyers of Wanstead's architectural fabric: a group of Norwich tradesmen, Stannard, Athow, de Carle, Wright and Coleman. At the same time as they were employed at Hills Road, they were also engaged in the construction of King's College, Cambridge.<sup>42</sup> As a result of their simultaneous work on these projects, it has been debated amongst local historians, and by Baggs himself, whether or not some of the Wanstead material was incorporated into the structure of this College and along the nearby King's Parade.<sup>43</sup> Lack of evidence, together with the widespread popularity of Wanstead's architectural style during the long eighteenth century, make this all the more difficult to determine. Baggs ultimately concludes that the majority of

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<sup>42</sup> Pevsner and Bradley, *Cambridgeshire*, p.128.

<sup>43</sup> Pevsner makes no reference to building material from Wanstead House along Kings Parade. For Kings Parade, Cambridge see: Pevsner and Bradley, *Cambridgeshire*, p.312.

building material from Wanstead was more likely to have been reused in the rapidly expanding development of east London.<sup>44</sup>

The temptation to identify other fragments of building material from Wanstead is highly seductive. The loss of the house makes the search for its fabric both appealing and poignant. This is indicated by the interest amongst local historians in two collapsed columns buried beneath the overgrowth in Dagnam Park, suggested to be of Wanstead origin (fig. 20). However, this attribution seems largely based on hearsay, rather than any substantial evidence. Mrs Marriott, the last private owner of Dagnam Manor, claimed that Sir Thomas Neave had described the collapsed columns in the park as coming from the Wanstead Portico. It is true that, in 1812, Neave had employed Humphry Repton, who was employed by the Wellesley Poles, to carry out improvements to the Dagnam landscape. It is thus possible, given the proximity of the manor to Wanstead, that these items were acquired to create some manner of 'ruin' in the landscape. However, only one of these columns is similar in size to those at Wanstead and, given that evidence is so considerably lacking, it is impossible to determine the substance of Marriott's claim with any certainty.<sup>45</sup> The interest in these columns, however, does indicate the somewhat romantic endeavour constituted by the search for lost elements of Wanstead, and attempts imaginatively to piece it back together.

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<sup>44</sup> Baggs, 'After-life of Wanstead', p.133. Thanks also to a conversation with Anthony Tavener regarding the buildings at Kings Parade, Cambridge and for his assistance in attempting to verify the attribution.

<sup>45</sup> No reference to any Wanstead attribution is made in the Victoria County History on Dagnam. See: W.R Powell ed., 'Romford' in *A History of the County of Essex*, Vol. VII (Oxford, 1978) pp.66-67.

The lack of existing documentation for the 1824 sale of the building material at Wanstead makes the task of tracing its architectural fabric very difficult. This thesis thus concentrates on the firmly attributed elements at Wanstead House in Cambridge.

### Furnishings

The Wanstead House sales consisted primarily of household furniture. In this study, I have concentrated my focus on the furniture that was contained in the most prized and public spaces of the interior, as these rooms were the most frequently commented upon in visitor descriptions and depicted in images. As a result, I have not been able to devote as much attention to the furnishings in the more private and utilitarian spaces of the house, and these would merit more attention in due course. My discussions of the furniture at Wanstead have relied upon visitor accounts, visual representations, the 1795 inventory and items which have resurfaced in more recent auction house sales and are identifiable as lots from the June and September sales of 1822.<sup>46</sup>

Whilst I refer to the inventory and sale catalogues frequently during discussions of the furnishings at Wanstead, there are notable differences between these sources. The June sale catalogue listed the contents of Wanstead House room by room. However, as this document was produced with a consumer market in mind some of the contents were separated off and sold on a specific day in order

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<sup>46</sup> See: *Wanstead House Sale*; CVE 39280; National Archives C 111/215, LONG v PHIPPS: Inventories of household furniture, plate, linen, china, books, wines and effects of Sir James Tilney-Long, deceased, at Draycot House near Chippenham, Wilts, and Wanstead House, Essex. Hereafter NA.

to attract a particular type of buyer.<sup>47</sup> Paintings, sculpture, tapestries, books and silverware, for example, were sold separately from the furnishings of the rooms in which they were originally displayed. This necessarily disrupted the original overall decorative scheme. The September sale, meanwhile, was arranged entirely by contents, rather than by room. However, the notes on some of the furnishings, paintings, tapestries and sculptures do provide descriptions of the rooms in which they were situated. Using this catalogue alongside the June catalogue makes it possible to establish otherwise unknown locations for particular items.

Given that the sale catalogues were products intended to attract wealthy buyers, items are also listed with varying degrees of detail, depending on whether or not they were fashionable objects and likely to fetch a high price. A copy of the June sale catalogue now held in the National Art Library usefully includes the names of buyers and the amounts they spent on their purchases. This establishes the value of particular lots. The names of the buyers are also indicative of the types of individuals who attended the Wanstead sale. For example, the presence of those agents for the Earl of Pembroke, buying for Wilton House in Salisbury, and for the Duke of Devonshire, acquiring items for Chatsworth in Derbyshire, not only indicates how fashionable an event this was, but also provides leads as to where the furniture may be found today.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, the September sale

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<sup>47</sup> MacArthur, 'Going for a Song?', p.186.

<sup>48</sup> Keeling, *Wanstead House and Chatsworth*; Cator, 'French Furniture at Wanstead', p.230.

Thanks to Katie Robson for a discussion of items of furnishings from Wanstead now displayed at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire.



catalogue does not list buyer's names. This makes tracing items dispersed in the second sale more difficult.

The 1795 inventory, held in the National Archives, lists the contents of Wanstead House by room, but, unlike the sale catalogues, it does not regroup any of the contents. The inventory therefore has the considerable value of including paintings, sculptures and tapestries within the overall descriptions of the rooms, helping us to locate and contextualise them. Lorna Weatherill's pioneering study on the use of inventories in relation to consumer culture in Britain during the early modern period states that inventories 'normally give a full account of household contents'.<sup>49</sup> However, it is important to note that, given that inventories were particular family records, rather than intended for public readership, the descriptions of objects and works of art are considerably less detailed in this document than they are in the sale catalogues. In addition, the values of items are not recorded in the inventory, making it difficult to ascertain which objects were considered to be of greatest value by their owners at the time the inventory was made.

The inventory and the two sale catalogues provide invaluable glimpses into how the Wanstead interior appeared during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: they are of considerably less help with how the rooms appeared prior to this date.<sup>50</sup> In her study of the 1822 sale catalogue of William Beckford's

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<sup>49</sup> L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660 – 1760* (London, 1988), p.2.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of how a series of inventories for one house can be used to document the development of a country house interior see: J. Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing

Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire, Anne Nellis Richter addresses the difficulties in using such a document as a guide to how a house was furnished. According to Nellis Richter, there are no extant visitor accounts describing the contents of Fonthill Abbey, because this was a private residence and not open to the visiting public. She also observes that the views of the interior that do exist are unreliable, because they were produced after the sale of the property to the gunpowder manufacturer, John Farquhar. The absence of such visitor accounts and contemporary visual material makes it difficult to cross examine the evidence of the sale catalogue, and to establish whether it does describe the interior as it appeared during Beckford's ownership - or whether this was, in fact, a display arranged specifically for the sale.<sup>51</sup> However, in a study of Wanstead, there is the opportunity to cross examine the sale catalogues against surviving visual representations of the house and visitor accounts, helping to establish which furnishings were of long standing at this point in the early nineteenth century, and which were more recent additions.

### Visual evidence

A significant amount of visual evidence survives for Wanstead, and it has played an important role in this study. From the time of Child's purchase in 1673 until the demolition of the house in 1824, Wanstead was represented many times in estate portraits, conversation pieces, maps, drawings, prints, architectural plans and design proposals. Understanding the various natures of such representations

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furnishings of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1717-1819', *Regional Furniture*, Vol. 27 (2013), pp.1-43.

<sup>51</sup> A. Nellis Richter, 'Spectacle, Exoticism, and Display in the Gentleman's House: The Fonthill Auction of 1822', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol.41, No. 4 (Summer 2008), pp.543-563.

is crucial, particularly in light of the absence of the house and the original landscape.

Visual representations are, arguably, one of the most problematic of all the sources available. There are (at least) three important issues to keep in mind when drawing on this type of evidence. The first is, of course, that of accuracy. Images, and, in particular, conversation pieces and estate portraits must be carefully considered when being used as historical evidence because they have various relationships with historical ‘reality’, and can never be taken at face value. Kate Retford has pointed out that to use a conversation piece in any straightforward illustrative fashion is deeply problematic.<sup>52</sup> Leading artists of the genre, such as Arthur Devis, would depict the same interior in more than one portrait, and sometimes fictionalise the objects surrounding the sitters as a means of better expressing their identity.<sup>53</sup>

Such issues of authenticity around the conversation piece has meant that the views of the Wanstead interior created by William Hogarth and Joseph Frans Nollekens have, at points, been entirely disregarded (figs 6 and 19).<sup>54</sup> However,

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<sup>52</sup> K. Retford, ‘From the Interior to Interiority: The Conversation Piece in Georgian England’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 20, No.4 (2007), pp.291-307.

<sup>53</sup> E. D’Oench, *Conversation Piece, Arthur Devis and his Contemporaries* (New Haven, 1980).

<sup>54</sup> See the following for discussions which dispute the authenticity of these views: by A. Marks, ‘Assembly at Wanstead House by William Hogarth’, *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol.77, No. 332 (Spring 1981), pp.2-15; R. Dormont, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp.157-162; C. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, 1993); E. Einberg, *Manners and Morals, Hogarth and British painting 1700-1760* (London, 1987), pp.122-123; M. Snodin ed., *Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth’s England* (London, 1984), p.35; S. Brindle, ‘Kent the Painter’ in *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* S. Weber (London and New Haven,

as we will see in chapter three, the process of cross referencing these paintings with items that have resurfaced in recent sales, along with the 1822 sale catalogues, the 1795 inventory and visitor accounts, indicates a notable and surprising degree of verisimilitude. This was effectively demonstrated in the 2013 Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition, *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain*, where Kent's gilt and crimson sofa was displayed alongside Hogarth's painting. This verified the authenticity of the furniture portrayed and confirmed those many contemporary descriptions of the Wanstead ballroom as being 'splendidly fitted up with gilt ornaments of all kinds'.<sup>55</sup>

Likewise, to interpret estate portraiture as proto-photographic in any way is also deeply problematic. This is because the genre, like portraiture, had various functions, not least the project of flattering patrons. The use of an elevated perspective over the estate landscape, for example, was a popular device in the late seventeenth century, introduced by Flemish artists such as Jans Siberechts and Leonard Knyff. Its aim was to communicate the extent of a country house owner's fortune and power, but artists therefore manufactured imaginary viewpoints, and represented impossible vistas.

A similar problem arises when studying estate maps, which, like portraits, were often produced with the intention of flattering the landowner and his property and, above all, as symbols of political power and wealth intended 'to satisfy the

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2013), pp.111-150; S. Weber, 'The Well of Inspiration: Sources for Kent's Furniture Designs' in *William Kent*, pp.449-468; J. Byrant, 'From "Gusto" to "Kentissime": Kent's Designs for Country Houses, Villas and Lodges' in *William Kent*, pp.183 -242.

<sup>55</sup> 'WANSTEAD HOUSE', pp.6-7.

owner's pride of possession'.<sup>56</sup> The design of a map, used to magnify the political impact of the view, quite often excluded smaller properties such as cottages, producing an ideal world for the surveyor's landed client.<sup>57</sup>

Estate portraits and maps could also engage with proposed and planned developments, which may or may not have been executed. In at least two painted views, Wanstead is depicted as having wings flanking either side of the house, a proposed feature that was never, in fact, carried out (figs 21 and 22). As we will see, the estate portraits and maps of Wanstead thus combine accurate, exaggerated and fictitious views of the house and landscape. However, as with the study of the conversation pieces, these visual representations are still an invaluable source, if properly set against other sources of evidence.

A related issue is that of context. Whilst a view may, or may not be accurate, it can nonetheless provide valuable information about social and ideological concerns during a particular period. During the early eighteenth century, there was widespread concern about the newly moneyed elite. This was largely due to a fear that the infusion of 'new men' into the upper echelons of society would corrupt elite manners and morals.<sup>58</sup> The unease stimulated by rapid social mobility surely encouraged many of the newly moneyed to behave

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<sup>56</sup> See discussions in P.D.A Harvey, 'English estate maps: Their early history and their use as historical evidence' in *Rural Images: Estate maps in the old and new worlds*, ed. D. Buisseret (Chicago, 1996); J. B Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge and power' in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments*, eds D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (Cambridge, 1988), pp.277–303.

<sup>57</sup> Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge and power', p.292.

<sup>58</sup> L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540- 1880* (Oxford, 1984), p.29.

appropriately, managing their estates effectively and appealing to contemporary ideals. Thus, whilst an estate portrait may have been made from an imaginary perspective, it can nonetheless be a significant source of evidence regarding concerns about hospitality, sociability, good estate management and the justification of wealth and status prevalent at this date.

Anne Laurence has noted that the use of figures in estate portraiture represented the ways in which the land was intended by its owners to be used.<sup>59</sup> This is indicated in an anonymous view of the Wanstead estate produced some time during the 1720s (fig. 23). This estate portrait demonstrates an attempt to display hospitality and sociability, by depicting clusters of figures of various social classes. In the foreground, a fashionably dressed, well-heeled couple, possibly visitors to the grounds, enjoy a walk whilst labourers are occupied at work nearby and another group of figures settle by a fire, drinking and conversing (figs 24-26). It is highly unlikely that any of these figures are portraits. Instead the view is better understood as an attempt to portray Child's estate as one that was effectively managed and where members of different social factions harmoniously coexisted.

It is also important to question the reasons behind the production of such a view. Maps were sometimes produced to document all that was under the landowner's possession - tenanted properties, holdings, agricultural land and woodlands - and subsequently were often made at the time of a change in ownership or in

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<sup>59</sup> A. Laurence, 'Space, Status and Gender in English Topographical Paintings c.1660 – c.1740', *Architectural History*, Vol. 46 (2003), pp.81-94.

connection with lawsuits.<sup>60</sup> In 1812, upon coming of age, the heiress Catherine Tylney Long instructed her solicitor to carry out a full audit of her assets and to have up-to date-maps produced of all the Tylney estates.<sup>61</sup> On other occasions, a map was designed to document a moment of change in the landscape.<sup>62</sup> John Rocque's map of 1735 (fig. 27), for example, presents attractive images of Wanstead in vignettes as well as an aerial view, in order to illustrate the recent or intended improvements for the early eighteenth-century landscape, depicted by Johann Kip and Leonard Knyff some time around 1713 (figs 28-30).

It is important to add that maps were often produced alongside a written survey of the site. Many maps have now become divorced from such accompanying texts. The majority of maps in the British Library collection, for example, were acquired as single items.<sup>63</sup> Any additional information that may have accompanied the maps of Wanstead is currently untraced. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the reasons behind the production of such documents, and often necessary to engage in some reasoned historical speculation.

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<sup>60</sup> Harvey, 'English estate maps', pp.27, 32.

<sup>61</sup> See: ERO D/DGn 433-40, Group of letters William Bullock as conducted audit for Catherine; ERO D/DGn 439, Rich Richardson to William Bullock, 24 September 1811; ERO D/DGn 435, John Varley to William Bullock, Halstead, 17 December 1810; ERO D/DGn 436, George Wright to William Bullock, 12 December 1810, which refers to an audit prepared for Catherine's other estates Halstead and Rochford. See also: ERO D/DCy P1, J. Doyley, Plans of Leasehold estates in the Manors of Ruckholt Wanstead and Woodford in Essex, the property of Miss Tylney Long taken 1811 and 1812. For maps see ERO D/DCW P18, Map of Leyton, Wanstead and Woodford, 1812.

<sup>62</sup> Harvey, 'English estate maps', p.52.

<sup>63</sup> Harvey, 'English estate maps', p.58.

A third issue to consider, concerning the use of visual material as historical evidence, is the practical matter of chronology. Printed views of the exterior and grounds of Wanstead largely date from the second half of the eighteenth century, and they can tell us relatively little about the earlier part of the period. Another example is provided by the architectural designs produced by Campbell, and published in the 1715 and 1725 volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus*. Some of these designs were produced while Wanstead was still under construction, and unfortunately nothing equivalent exists for its final appearance. The views of the ballroom and saloon by Hogarth and Nollekens are the only extant images of the interior, and, like the Campbell images, they also date from the first half of the eighteenth century.

Although there are thus important difficulties to consider when dealing with visual evidence, there are also major benefits. For example, the range of visual material helps to establish when particular features were introduced to the house and landscape, and thus to plot a timeline of improvements undertaken by successive owners. This underlines P.D.A Harvey's comment that estate maps were able to demonstrate the sequence and process of change on an eighteenth-century estate.<sup>64</sup> This is particularly important when dealing with the landscape improvements carried out between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, chapter three will demonstrate how a comparison between Kip and Knyff's views of the estate made between 1707 and 1713 and James Craddock's 1725 map illustrates how Richard Child amended the

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<sup>64</sup> Harvey, 'English estate maps', p.52.



landscape following the completion of Campbell's newly designed Wanstead House (figs 28-30 and 31).

Efforts to document design developments chronologically, however, takes us back to the crucial issue that a number of views used in this thesis were in fact proposals, rather than representations. Some features illustrated in Rocque's 1735 map have not been proven to have been executed, such as the wings on the house and the island shaped like the British Isles. This strongly suggests that the map included a number of anticipated developments (fig. 27). Chapter four relies heavily on illustrated views of the landscape by Humphry Repton and Lewis Kennedy. Again, however, these views were not immediate representations, but were instead very much part of larger proposals. As will be explored, Repton's depictions of the grounds, for example, may be somewhat affected by the desire to enhance the impact of his design proposals – only some of which were executed. Kennedy's designs for the American Garden made in 1818 do not appear to have been fully implemented, and largely constitute anticipated developments, had Wanstead not fallen into decline. Chapter four will therefore highlight the need to cross-reference design proposals with archaeological evidence, in order to establish when and to what extent particular proposals were carried out.

### Textual evidence

There are three main forms of textual sources for Wanstead: visitor accounts; family correspondence; and poetry. Visitor accounts of the estate date from as early as Samuel Pepys's 1665 description of the Wanstead manor and John

Evelyn's account of his visit during Josiah Child's ownership, in 1683. They continue throughout the eighteenth century with narratives by John Macky (1722), Daniel Defoe (1724), Peter Kalm (1748), Horace Walpole (1755), Peter Muilman (1768), Lybbe Powys (1781), the Reverend Stebbing Shaw (1788) and Louis Joseph, Prince de Condé (1804).<sup>65</sup> Other descriptions can be found in newspaper publications.

It is, however, crucial to differentiate between these visitor accounts. The descriptions of Wanstead by Pepys, Evelyn, Kalm, Walpole and Powys, for example, are recorded in personal diaries and correspondence. Diary accounts of Wanstead are arguably more 'direct' responses to the estate, as not - at least ostensibly - intended for wider readership (although these recorded visits to Wanstead were subsequently, posthumously published in the first half of the nineteenth century).<sup>66</sup> They are invaluable in helping to provide a view of the

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<sup>65</sup> R. Latham ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection* (London: Penguin, 2003); E.S de Beer ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn in six volumes* (Oxford, 2000); P.N Furbank and W.R. Owens ed., *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain / Daniel Defoe* (London, 1991); J. Macky, *A Journey through England. In familiar letters. From a gentleman here, to his friend abroad* (London, 1722); P. Kalm, *Account of his visit to England on his way to America* (1748); H. Walpole, *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole with George Montagu Esq., [and others]: 1735-1759* (London, 1837); P. Muilman, *A New and Complete History of Essex*, 6 vols (Chelmsford, 1771), IV; Rev. S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England in 1788* (London, 1788); E.J Climenson ed., *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon., AD 1756 to 1808* (London, 1899).

<sup>66</sup> Selections of the text from Samuel Pepys diary first published in 1825 see: C. S. Knighton, 'Pepys, Samuel (1633–1703)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21906](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21906), accessed 23 June 2015; According to E.S De Beer, first reference to Evelyn's diary is by George Vertue in 1742. However, Evelyn's diary was not published until 1809 by William Bray and William Upcott. See: Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, p.51. Caroline Lybbe Powys' diary was published in 1899; see Climenson, *Passages from the diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys* and A. Pimlott Baker, 'Powys, Caroline (1738–1817)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68336](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68336),

ways in which contemporaries responded to the house and its landscape. For example, Evelyn's diary entry of 16<sup>th</sup> March 1683 describes the site as a 'Cursed & barren spot; as commonly these over growne & suddainly monied men for the most part seate themselves'.<sup>67</sup> Whilst his views about the newly moneyed elite may well have been in line with those of his contemporaries, such criticism is unlikely to have been intended for public readership.

Like diaries, correspondence describing Wanstead House can also potentially convey a more direct response of an individual's experience.<sup>68</sup> Walpole's description of Wanstead in his letter to Richard Bentley on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1755 was again far from complimentary, criticising Child's *nouveau riche* tastes:

the house that is, 100,000l...is wretched; the furniture fine but totally without taste: such continences and incontinences of Scipio and Alexander, by I don't know whom! Such flame-coloured gods and goddesses by Kent! Such family pieces by – I believe the late earl himself, for they are as ugly as the children he really begot!<sup>69</sup>

However, later, Walpole seemingly attempts to compensate for such scathing remarks, by going on to describe Child as, nonetheless, 'the most generous

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accessed 8 June 2015. Peter Kalm's diary was published in 1892: see *Kalm's account of his visit to England on his way to America in 1748. Extracted from En Resa til Norra America, Translated by Joseph Lucase. With two maps, etc.* (London, 1892).

<sup>67</sup> Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, p.306.

<sup>68</sup> For discussions on eighteenth-century letter writing see: C. Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (London, 2006); B. Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Chicago and London, 1986); S. Whyman, *Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1600-1800* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>69</sup> Walpole, *Correspondence*, p.281; Newham Archives, Hiram Stead Newspaper Cuttings Collection, p.41. Hereafter Stead.

creature in the world' and Wanstead's disposition as 'very fine'.<sup>70</sup> The shift in tone demonstrates how epistolary evidence can present its own complexities when being used as historical evidence. Clare Brant cautions that to interpret correspondence as a private medium, revealing the writer's inner thoughts, is problematic.<sup>71</sup> Personal letters still required a certain code of conduct, typically demanding a degree of politeness and adherence to genteel conventions. This was because letters were often composed in the company of others, and were then read openly by multiple readers or read out to them, copied and preserved.<sup>72</sup> Walpole may have felt that his initial comments were impolite and that, despite his disapproval of Child's *nouveau riche* taste, some genteel compliment was still required. However, Brant also comments that an overweening sense of letters as the products of polite society can ignore how politeness bred its antonym: a discourse of rudeness, deploying irony, satire and abuse. She has noted that making 'elegant insults' was an important part of eighteenth-century social expression.<sup>73</sup> This provides an alternative reading of Walpole's letter to Richard Bentley, countering the idea that he felt any need to temper his scathing account of Wanstead and its owner, instead inviting us to accept the impolite, the polite, and the complex relationship between the two in this missive.<sup>74</sup> Above all, however, such considerations remind us of the necessary distinction between correspondence and personal diary accounts; the former as more subject to an audience.

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<sup>70</sup> Walpole, *Correspondence*, p.281.

<sup>71</sup> Brant, *Eighteenth-century Letters*, p.4.

<sup>72</sup> Brant, *Eighteenth-century Letters*, p.9; Whyman, *Pen and People*, p.23.

<sup>73</sup> Brant, *Eighteenth-century Letters*, p.4.

<sup>74</sup> Walpole, *Correspondence*, p.281.

In addition, it is important to distinguish between correspondence and printed letters, destined for publication, and immediately issued. A number of letters referred to throughout this thesis, such as Macky's *A Journey Through England in familiar letters from a gentleman here to his friend abroad* and Kalm's *Account of his visit to England*, were produced as printed letters designed for a wider readership. The format of 'from a gentleman' to 'his friend' was a common one used to break down class barriers between the author and his intended readership, drawing attention to shared interests.<sup>75</sup>

These letters take a similar approach to descriptions of Wanstead in other published visitor accounts, such as Defoe's *A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain*, Muilman's *A New and Complete History of Essex* and Shaw's *A Tour to the West of England*, all of which were fully intended for public readership, published more or less around the time of authorship. They were typically more complimentary than some of the diarists, commonly describing Wanstead as magnificent and 'superior to any building in Italy'.<sup>76</sup> As their titles suggest, these publications were in part intended to encourage a sense of national pride by providing detailed accounts of the history and natural beauty of, and architectural and landscape achievements across the country. Discussions of landed estates were therefore common throughout these texts. For example, in *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, Daniel Defoe describes the overall work as 'a description of the most flourishing and opulent country in the

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<sup>75</sup> Brant, *Eighteenth-century Letters*, p.12.

<sup>76</sup> *Ambulator, or, A Pocket Companion in a Tour round London* (London, 1794), p.288.

world'.<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting that such publications may well have influenced diary writers, suggesting what they should consider noteworthy.

One of the problems around this type of published material is the question of authorship. In the second volume of Macky's *Journey*, the author significantly asserts the accuracy of his accounts:

The person that presents you with this, hath been so exact as to examine everything himself, and hath inserted nothing but what he hath seen; therefore he hopes to give you as much Pleasure in reading...as he really had in seeing the places contained in it.<sup>78</sup>

It could be that Macky felt it necessary to emphasise this due to a tendency amongst such writers to borrow descriptions of sites by other authors. In his introduction to Defoe's *Tour*, the literary critic and biographer, P.N. Furbank acknowledges disputes around the authenticity of Defoe's accounts, and refers to accusations that the author stole from both Macky's 1722 descriptions and William Dugdale's *Monasticon*, published in 1717.<sup>79</sup>

Also problematic are the practical limitations of these sources. There are considerable gaps between the dates when descriptions of Wanstead were published. Visitor accounts also, inevitably, tend to comment solely on the principal, public spaces of the house. We are provided with little evidence as to the appearance of the more private rooms, restricted to broader public access.

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<sup>77</sup> Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.3.

<sup>78</sup> Macky, *Journey Through England*, p.iii.

<sup>79</sup> Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.ix.

Significantly, the only major source of evidence not available to a study of Wanstead is a guidebook. John Harris's country house index makes no record of any such guides for Wanstead.<sup>80</sup> By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the country-house guidebook had become an important component of country-house visiting, highlighting to visitors which features of the house were worthy of their attention. Jocelyn Anderson states that Benton Seeley's guidebook for Stowe, published in 1744, was the earliest of these publications.<sup>81</sup> As this thesis will demonstrate, the most active period at Wanstead was the first half of the eighteenth century, under the ownership of Richard Child. The brief and absent ownerships that occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century militated against the production of any country-house guide for Wanstead: its most blossoming period predating the heyday of such books.

Another form of textual source for Wanstead used in this study is the surviving family correspondence, now held at the Redbridge Central Library, Essex Record Office and the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. That in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre largely consists of letters between John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, and his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Long. Letters also survive to and from James Tylney Long during his ownership of Wanstead, between 1785 and 1795. There is also some correspondence regarding Catherine's courtship by the Duke of Clarence. Material held at the Essex Record office relates to the engagement of William Wellesley Pole and

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<sup>80</sup> J. Harris, *A Country House Index* (Shalfleet, 1971).

<sup>81</sup> See: B. Seeley, *A Description of the Gardens of Lord Viscount Cobham, at Stow in Buckinghamshire*, (London, 1744). For a discussion of country-house guidebooks see: J. Anderson, *Remaking the country house: country house guidebooks in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2013).

Catherine Tylney Long in 1812, as well as estate management and the decision to sell Wanstead House.<sup>82</sup> The majority of correspondence held at the Redbridge Central Library dates from the early nineteenth century, with a considerable amount relating to the marriage of William and Catherine, the dismantling of the house and the legal proceedings that followed William and Catherine's separation.

Many of the letters that I have traced date from the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century: there is a substantial lack of material from the early eighteenth century. There is also no surviving correspondence from the time of Josiah Child's tenure in the late seventeenth century. This is problematic, as it greatly restricts evidence available of the opinions, plans and ambitions of the early owners of Wanstead, who purchased the estate, built the house, and established the grounds. The possible views and motivations of Josiah and Richard Child can thus only, where possible, be postulated on the basis of fragmentary evidence, and consideration of wider socio-cultural ideals.

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<sup>82</sup> See: Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre 947/2116, 5 letters, mainly drafts, from Sir Robert Long, 6th Bart, writing from Wanstead House, Essex and Draycot to his daughter Dorothy and his elder son James. Hereafter WSHC; WSHC 947/2112, Bundle of miscellaneous correspondence received by Sir Robert Long of Draycot House 1731, 1761-1770, 1775, 1783-1789 1763-1766; WSHC 1869/1, Letters to Sir James Tylney Long - some relate to estate affairs 1774-1776; WSHC 947/2121, Letter from John 2nd Earl Tylney, residing at Florence to Sir James Tylney Long 1775; WSHC 2062/4, Settlement giving Miss Catherine Tylney Long an independent income after marriage 1812; WSHC 947/2117, Letters from James Long at Marseilles while travelling in Europe in company of John, 2nd Earl Tylney (1764); WSHC 2246, William IV, photocopies and transcripts of letters written by Duke of Clarence (William IV) during courtship; ERO TA/404/1, Microfilm of letters chiefly to Catherine Tylney Long and William Wellesley Pole, 1806-1832.



A third textual source for Wanstead is poetry. There are two poems which refer to the Wanstead estate: John Harris's *Leighton-Stone Air, A Poem, or a Poetical Encomium on the Excellency of its SOIL, Healthy AIR and Beauteous Situation*, published in 1702, and an anonymous poem entitled *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden, An Heroick Poem Most Humbly Addrest to the honourable Sir Richard Child*.<sup>83</sup> The latter was published by John Morphew in 1712. Harris's poem is dedicated to the Latin Boarding School that had recently been founded in the area, and not the Wanstead estate itself.<sup>84</sup> The poem engages with the landscape surrounding Epping Forest, praising the advantages of its situation as a healthy location, removed from London, whilst also highlighting the benefits of its proximity. Within the poem, Harris refers to Wanstead, describing it as one of the pleasing features of this landscape: a 'Pleasant Villa on the Forest near Leighton-Stone made very delicious by the new plantations Sir Josiah Child has honoured it with'.<sup>85</sup>

*Flora Triumphans*, on the other hand, was a poem produced specifically for the Wanstead estate, dedicated to 'the honourable Sir Richard Child'.<sup>86</sup> Estate poetry had become a popular literary form in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, used to memorialize an estate, celebrate its owner and, according to

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<sup>83</sup> Anonymous, *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden, An Heroick Poem Most Humbly Addrest to the honourable Sir Richard Child* (London, 1712), p.5; J. Harris, *Leighton-Stone Air: A Poem, or a Poetical Encomium on the Excellency of its SOIL, Healthy AIR and Beauteous Situation* (London, 1702).

<sup>84</sup> Harris, *Leighton-Stone Air*.

<sup>85</sup> W. A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley, 1977), p.38.

<sup>86</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, frontispiece.

W.A. McClung, 'serve as affirmations of a peculiarly English excellence'.<sup>87</sup> A general feature of country house poetry was to serve as a tribute to the owner, rather than the building itself, the prospect of reward presumably being more likely.<sup>88</sup> In *Flora Triumphans*, the Wanstead manor is described as a 'venerable old pile'. The poet significantly focuses almost entirely on the estate landscape, rather than the house. It is unclear whether or not *Flora Triumphans* was a commissioned piece. However, given that London and Wise's landscape works had only recently been completed at this date, and that construction of the new house was about to begin, it does seem likely that this piece was commissioned by Richard Child himself, as a testament to Wanstead's development and increasing splendour.<sup>89</sup>

These two poems have been used in chapters one and two of this thesis to indicate the significance of Child's acquisition of the estate, as well as to help establish the landscape improvements that were carried out by London and Wise between 1706 and 1712. Harris's descriptions of the landscape in his *Leighton-Stone Air* helps us to understand why this area may have been appealing to Child, seeking a suburban property. The descriptions of the landscape in *Flora Triumphans* indicate that London and Wise's newly introduced features were

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<sup>87</sup> McClung, *Country House*, p.38. For discussions of seventeenth-century country house poetry see also: A. Fowler, *The Country House Poem, A Cabinet of Seventeenth Century Estate Poems and Related Items* (Edinburgh, 1994); G. R Hibbard, 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 19, No. 1/2 (January - June 1956), pp.159-174.

<sup>88</sup> McClung, *Country House*, p.131.

<sup>89</sup> Alastair Fowler states that country house poetry ought to be viewed as a group of genres. For a list of the subgenre categories, which Fowler attributes to country house poetry, see: Fowler, *Country House Poem*, p.14.

celebrated features of the estate. The allusions made in the latter to the Garden of Eden, a common motif in country house poetry, and classical mythology may well indicate Child's desire to enhance his social standing through the use of high cultural references, well known amongst the elite.<sup>90</sup>

Kari Boyd McBride has pointed out that, unlike the estates themselves, these poems were portable and widely distributed; 'pocket book icons of the signifying landscape that served to legitimate authority apart from the land itself'.<sup>91</sup> The publication of these poems presumably had a significant impact on fashionable society's knowledge and perception of Wanstead as a significant estate to be visited. They also provide the earliest evidence of the ways in which Wanstead's owners attempted to promote the estate.

### **Themes of this thesis**

As is evident from the discussion of sources, above, the method of reconstructing a lost estate is an overarching issue to be explored in this thesis. I would like, now, to sketch out three other dominant themes: Wanstead's geographical location; the social status of the Childs; and the process of 'animating' the eighteenth-century estate.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Fowler, *Country House Poem*, p.4.

<sup>91</sup> K. Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A cultural study of landscape and legitimacy* (Ashgate, 2001), p.11.

<sup>92</sup> Use of the term 'animating the country house' has been inspired by the 'Animating the eighteenth-century Country House: Display and Experience' conference which took place at the National Gallery in March 2015. Use of the term has been credited to Mark Hallett, Director of the Paul Mellon Centre, and it highlights that the country house was a space in constant flux and subject to regular development and reconceptualization.

Despite being situated only eight miles north east of London, most eighteenth-century printed views of Wanstead in its country setting could easily mislead one into believing them to be depictions of a far flung country house. However, other images, such as those by Kip and Knyff, an unknown artist in the 1720s and Humphry Repton, do take care to show London in the distance (figs 23 and 29). The inclusion of the city in these views indicates that this proximity was a noted feature of the estate, worth celebrating. Indeed, when making proposals for improvements at Wanstead in 1813, Repton stated; ‘those who would treat this splendid palace like the seat of an English Country Gentleman at a hundred miles distance, would rob it of all its importance and more than half its interest and beauty’.<sup>93</sup> Wanstead’s proximity to the metropolis, raises the critical question as to whether or not it is entirely appropriate to consider Wanstead as ‘a country house’.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a country house as: ‘A house in the country; *esp.* (in Britain) a large one with extensive grounds or surrounding land, typically the residence of a wealthy or aristocratic family; a country seat’.<sup>94</sup> Wanstead is certainly large; it has extensive grounds; it was the home to a wealthy, and newly aristocratic family: but is it ‘in the country’ in the same way as somewhere like Kedleston, or Chatsworth, both in Derbyshire? Certainly, in its appearance, Wanstead did look like other residences which can indubitably be defined as country houses. Contemporaries frequently compared it to great

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<sup>93</sup> H. Repton, *Proposals for Improvements at Wanstead* (1813), p.6, Paul Getty Library.

Hereafter PGL. Thanks to Bryan Maggs for allowing me access to this material.

<sup>94</sup> "country house, n.", Oxford English Dictionary Online,  
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/43089?redirectedFrom=country+house>,  
 accessed February 04, 2016. Hereafter OED.

seats such as Blenheim, Houghton, Holkham and Wilton.<sup>95</sup> Yet, it is worth noting that no contemporary descriptions do, in fact, call Wanstead itself a ‘country’ seat. The reason behind this is probably Wanstead’s proximity to London.

Elizabeth McKellar has recently explained how distinctions between London, suburban regions and the countryside were somewhat blurred for contemporaries.<sup>96</sup> She has stated that commentators in the period often noted the vast scale of London, and its relative unknowability, unable to comprehend where it began and ended.<sup>97</sup> Defoe, for example, referred to the ever-growing expanse of the metropolis, describing it as having ‘spread the face of it in a most straggling, confused manner, out of all shape’.<sup>98</sup> This was a result of the growing trend, particularly amongst the mercantile elite, to acquire property outside of the city in areas such as Highgate and Hackney. Evidence of this movement amongst the richest members of the mercantile sorts into the London suburbs will be addressed in chapter one of this dissertation, when discussing Josiah Child’s acquisition of Wanstead in 1673.

The difficulty of making these distinctions complicates the matter of how properties near the metropolis were defined at the time, and how they are subsequently understood by historians. Given that its proximity to London raises problems when defining Wanstead as a ‘country house’, is it perhaps more

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<sup>95</sup> Muilman, *New and Complete History of Essex*, p.229.

<sup>96</sup> E. McKellar, *Landscapes of London: The city, the country and the suburbs 1660-1840* (London and New Haven, 2013), p.7.

<sup>97</sup> McKellar, *Landscapes of London*, p.7.

<sup>98</sup> Defoe, *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.287.

appropriate for it instead to be described as a Georgian ‘villa’? Significantly, James Ackermann states that the villa cannot be understood apart from the city: escapism from urban life was the villa’s *raison d’être*. This is because villas provided one with the opportunity to profit from the financial and social life of the city, whilst also enjoying the benefits of country living.<sup>99</sup> It can certainly be argued that, by acquiring a suburban property within such easy reach of the city, Josiah Child was subscribing to such ideals. Indeed, John Harris’s poem *Leighton-Stone Air* does describe Wanstead as ‘a pleasant villa’ in 1702.<sup>100</sup> Was this, however, how Josiah himself would have defined his property in the late seventeenth century?

The growing interest in villas during the eighteenth century stemmed from an enthusiasm for those classical designs used for Italian renaissance villas, particularly those by Andrea Palladio. This was fuelled by the publication of Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus* and Giacomo Leoni’s translation of Palladio’s *Quattro Libri* in 1715.<sup>101</sup> Palladio’s villas were on country estates, tied to agricultural activity and reliant on their relationship with the city for financial support. In eighteenth-century English commentaries, however, the villa seems to have been disassociated from its relationship with estates and agriculture, and instead understood primarily as a humble but tasteful residence, situated just

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<sup>99</sup> Ackerman, *Villa*, p.9.

<sup>100</sup> Harris, *Leighton-Stone Air*, p.33.

<sup>101</sup> G. Leoni, *The Architecture of Andrea Palladio; in Four Books* (London, 1715); For details regarding Leoni’s publication see: E. Harris, ‘Vitruvius Britannicus before Colen Campbell’, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.128, No. 998 (May 1986), pp.336 -340; S. Parissien, *Palladian Style* (London, 1994).

outside the city; a site celebrating nature. In 1700, for example, Timothy Nourse described the villa as:

A little House of Pleasure and Retreat, where Gentlemen and Citizens betake themselves in Summer for their private Diversion, there to pass an evening or two, or perhaps a Week, in the Conversation of a Friend or two, in some net little House amidst a Vinyard or Garden, sequestered from the Noise of a City, and the Embarrass or Distraction of Busines, or perhaps the anxious and servile Attendance of a Court.<sup>102</sup>

The idea of the villa in eighteenth-century England thus notably differed from the idea of the country house; a site more predominantly for leisure and, to an extent, a more private retreat.

However, Dana Arnold, Ackerman and Dorian Gerhold explain that definitions of this eighteenth-century label are somewhat problematic. This is because the Georgian villa was designed in response to a set of ideals, accommodating a fantasy that responded to various ideological needs.<sup>103</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of a villa is therefore, unsurprisingly, rather complicated;

a country mansion or residence, together with a farm, farm buildings, or other houses attached, built or occupied by a person of some position and wealth; a country seat or estate; in later and more general use, a residence in the country, or in a neighbourhood

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in D. Gerhold 'London's Suburban Villas and Mansions, 1660-1830', *The London Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (November 2009), pp.233-263.

<sup>103</sup> D. Arnold, *The Georgian Villa* (Stroud, 1996); J. Ackerman, *The villa: form, and ideology of country houses* (London, 1990); Gerhold 'London's Suburban Villas and Mansions'. See also: J. Stobart, "'So agreeable and suitable a place" The Character, Use and Provisioning of a Late Eighteenth-Century Suburban Villa', *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 2016), pp.89-102.

of a town, usually of some size and architectural elegance and standing in its own grounds.<sup>104</sup>

Broadly speaking, however, it was the villa's use as a retreat from urban life, and its connection with nature, that generally justified the application of the term in England during the eighteenth century.<sup>105</sup>

When owned by the Earl of Leicester, during the sixteenth century, Wanstead had served as a royal hunting lodge; overwhelmingly a site of leisure and retreat. Leicester owned two other properties at this time: Leicester House on the Strand in London, and Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire. Although Wanstead offered some of the pleasures of country life, it was in fact Kenilworth that was considered to be his 'country' residence. The role of Wanstead during this period suggests that, in Leicester's day, it complied with the ideas that were to become associated with the villa during the eighteenth century. Moreover, the scale of the Elizabethan manor was suited to a 'villa' status. When Josiah Child purchased Wanstead, the site consisted of three hundred acres of land. This was not considered a sizable estate, and certainly fell short of the large acreages that many country houses could boast.

However, not only Leicester's period, but also Child's acquisition of Wanstead predated the wider interest in villas set in motion by Colen Campbell's designs for Newby (1718), Mereworth (1722) and Marble Hall (1724), and Lord

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<sup>104</sup> "villa, n." OED

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/223405?redirectedFrom=villa>, accessed 4 February 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Arnold, *Georgian Villa*, p.x.



Burlington's Chiswick House (1725), modelled on Palladio's Villa Rotunda. Furthermore, as in the case of other estates, Wanstead was greatly expanded and redeveloped over subsequent years. Although it may have complied with a set of ideologies to become associated with the suburban 'villa' at the time of Child's initial acquisition, its evolution over the following decades surely elevated Wanstead to what most historians would now define as 'a country house'.

Describing Wanstead as a country house may however, detract from the significance of Wanstead's setting, which, as this thesis will demonstrate, had a profound impact on the estate. The combination of both villa and country house characteristics mean that Wanstead resists straightforward categorization. For the purposes of clarity, I will therefore describe Wanstead throughout this thesis as an eighteenth-century 'estate'.

In addition to the issue of how we might define Wanstead, the estate's geographical location raises two other important questions. First, how was its proximity to London advantageous for the estate and its owners? As stated above, the acquisition of a property so close to the city meant that Wanstead's owners could adopt a gentlemanly country life, whilst also maintaining close and constant financial and political links with the city. It was widely known that landed investments could provide relatively modest financial returns, and so maintaining the family's business ties and activities, and keeping a close eye on them, was important for ensuring a reliable income. The benefits of Wanstead's proximity to London are also indicated by the way in which the house was able easily to accommodate and entertain numerous guests, as well as tourists.

Regular access to the city, even for an estate situated so near to the metropolis, made a London town house a necessity for the incumbents of Wanstead.<sup>106</sup> Between 1742 and 1750, Sir Richard Child lived at No. 20 Soho Square, and, throughout the eighteenth century, the Child family leased properties elsewhere in London; in St James's Square, Hanover Street, Covent Garden, Paddington and Dean Street.<sup>107</sup> Whilst setting out to London and returning to Wanstead within an evening was achievable, the ownership of a town house was key to social and political advancement. Amongst the various benefits one could acquire and take away from the metropolis, was the acquisition of a certain urbanity. Rachel Stewart comments that it was this, perhaps, that was the most valued advantage of a house in London.<sup>108</sup> At his residence in the city, Richard Child was able to maintain his ties with the Whig elite and network with significant and emerging architects, designers and artists, which benefitted the Wanstead estate. Some of the men he patronised became leading designers of the Georgian period, following their employment at Wanstead, and, consequently, the house became an influential model, aided by its proximity to the metropolis and its popularity amongst tourists.

The London town house also provided a home for various members of the family who might not reside at the family seat, such as a younger son with fewer

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<sup>106</sup> For a discussion of the Georgian London town house see: R. Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London* (London and New Haven, 2009).

<sup>107</sup> See: F.H.W Sheppard ed., *Survey of London: The Parish of St Anne Soho*, Vol. 33 (London, 1966), pp.69, 84; R. O'Day ed., *Cassandra Brydges (1670-1735) First Duchess of Chandos Life and Letters* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp.200, 281. See also: *London Daily Advertiser & Literary Gazette* (22 October 1751) which advertised the sale of the contents of Richard Child's house in Soho Square by the auctioneer, Mr Prestage on 12 November 1851.

<sup>108</sup> Stewart, *Town House*, p.31.

obligations, eager to set up his own establishment, or a widow who had stepped down and allowed her son to take over ownership of the country residence.<sup>109</sup> Emma, Richard's mother, for example, resided at No. 26 Soho Square from 1712 until her death in 1725.<sup>110</sup> According to Stewart, the reinforcement of family connections appears to have been another important function of the London town house and family members often lived near one another. Emma's daughter, Cassandra Brydges, Duchess of Chandos and Richard's half sister, frequently spent time at her London residence in Albemarle Street, presumably acquired partially on account of its proximity to her family.<sup>111</sup> In his will of 1794, James Tylney Long, who owned Wanstead between 1784 and 1794, bequeathed money for rent to ensure his wife 'shall have a suitable Town Residence... in the City of London or Westminster or Marylebone'.<sup>112</sup>

Many landed families were also drawn into town on account of the social and cultural events that developed alongside the extended parliament sessions. 'The season' became an established annual event. London residents could enjoy regular balls, parties, plays and operas. This was an important social arena, particularly with regards to seeking out a suitable marital match. Prior to her marriage, Catherine Tylney Long lived in Soho with two of her aunts. Her status as a wealthy heiress made her highly sought after in the London marriage market. These functions of the London town house illustrate the significance such residences had throughout the eighteenth century as a means of

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<sup>109</sup> Stewart, *Town House*, p.33.

<sup>110</sup> Sheppard, *Survey of London*, pp.69, 84; O'Day, *Cassandra Brydges*, pp.200, 281.

<sup>111</sup> O'Day, *Cassandra Brydges*, p.15.

<sup>112</sup> NA PROB 11/1253/199, Will of Sir James Tylney Long of Draycot Cerne, Wiltshire, 24 December 1794.

accommodating family members and maintaining the all-important links with the metropolis.

This thesis will also explore Wanstead's geographical situation within Essex. According to McKellar, as well as Peter Earle and Margaret Hunt, and as already noted, suburban districts such as Highgate, Hackney and Tottenham were popular amongst the city elite.<sup>113</sup> Whilst, on the one hand, Child's purchase of a suburban property was typical of the newly moneyed, this thesis will evaluate how his decision to be situated slightly further away from London than his peers paved the way for significant expansion of the property. In 1670, only forty houses stood in Wanstead, and Wanstead House was amongst the largest.<sup>114</sup> The extensive landscape and building improvements that were carried out throughout the eighteenth century demonstrate that Child allowed for the space to expand, setting in motion the growth of a particularly ambitious estate.

Obtaining a large property in this area also provided the opportunity for exercising political influence on both a local and national level. This is indicated by the various positions the owners of Wanstead House held throughout the eighteenth century, as Members of Parliament for Essex, as well as other counties. They also acted as Sheriff and Forest Warden for Epping Forest. This leads onto a second key theme of this thesis: social status. This includes the significance of the initial acquisition of the Wanstead estate for the Child family,

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<sup>113</sup> McKellar, *Landscapes of London*, p.1; P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), p.155; M. R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England 1680-1780* (London, 1996), p.3.

<sup>114</sup> M. Parsons, 'Wanstead' in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Essex* ed., B. Pugh, Vol. VI (London, 1973), p.318.

the rebuilding of the house and improvements carried out, the practice of sociability and issues of estate management throughout the long eighteenth century.

Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley have noted that the acquisition, construction or rebuilding of a country house was vital in attaining status. Furthermore, Mark Girouard observed that, when a 'new' man bought an estate and built on it, the kind of house he constructed indicated his particular aspirations.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, this thesis will evaluate the impact which architectural and landscape improvements at Wanstead had upon the family's status and their reputation. How, for example, did Richard Child's rebuilding of Wanstead House in the early eighteenth century reflect his efforts to enhance the status which his father, Josiah, had already established by acquiring Wanstead?

Lawrence and Jeanne Fawtier Stone's study of the elite proposed that the uppermost echelons of society during this period were highly permeable - as long as certain modes of behaviour and lifestyle were adopted.<sup>116</sup> Imitation, or emulation, could be, therefore, a popular tool of the newly moneyed elite, adopting a lifestyle associated with more fully established members of elite society. I will explore this particularly in chapter two, when discussing Child's employment of leading landscape designers, London and Wise, who were responsible for the gardens of many other great country houses in the early eighteenth century.

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<sup>115</sup> M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London and New Haven, 1978), p.2.

<sup>116</sup> Stone, *Open Elite*, p.29.

On the other hand, as this thesis will show, Wanstead was also somewhat unusual in the Child family's employment of relatively untested designers and innovative designs. During the first half of the eighteenth century, Richard Child demonstrated considerable idiosyncratic patronage. The employment of the newly established Colen Campbell and William Kent raises interesting issues regarding his identity as a patron, and its significance for his status. Was Child merely fortunate in employing designers who were later to become so prominent and prolific, or was this rather the result of an astute awareness of upcoming trends? And, if so, how did Child help to establish those trends?

According to scholars such as John Brewer, access to culture and self-presentation in the cultural arena was a vital means of maintaining or attaining social status and of establishing social distinctions.<sup>117</sup> The town houses resided in by Child at St James Square in 1706, and Covent Garden in 1717, no doubt provided ample opportunity to network with Whigs and designers such as William Kent and Colen Campbell, who lived nearby on Old Burlington Street and Savile Row.<sup>118</sup> To what extent was their employment the result of the types of networking that occurred amongst town house residents, and how important was the town house in facilitating these connections?

Furthermore, to what extent did the employment of these designers at Wanstead contribute to the success of their careers, consequently consolidating Wanstead's

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<sup>117</sup> J. Brewer, '“The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious”: Attitudes Towards Culture as a Commodity, 1660 – 1800' in *The Consumption of Culture 160-1800: Image, Object, Text* ed., A. Bermingham and J. Brewer (London, 1995), p.345.

<sup>118</sup> J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (London and New Haven, 1945) p.91.

claim to status and justifying the family's newly acquired wealth? Newfound wealth raised concerns about how best to demonstrate one's worthiness of elite status and a landed estate. John Habakkuk has argued that 'land was the most visible and therefore the most effective way of exhibiting wealth'.<sup>119</sup> But how might new wealth and elite status be displayed without appearing 'crude'? Much of the answer surely lies in the performance of sociability. My study of the various owners of the Wanstead estate will address the different ways in which sociability was accommodated and performed throughout the eighteenth century, using visitor accounts, diaries, prints and paintings.

In addition, managing an estate effectively through responsible financial management, oversight of tenanted land, agriculture and employees, as well as attention to hospitality, were all part and parcel of what was deemed 'good' land ownership in this period. All this was crucial in the maintenance of social status. Habakkuk described the estate owner as the head of a community of tenants and labourers, with 'specific functions and responsibilities, social and economic'.<sup>120</sup> The Wanstead estate, however, was subject to varying degrees of effective management. Wanstead's downfall amply reveals the types of difficulties that could arise in maintaining landed assets of this type during the long eighteenth century.

Despite the sense of dominance and permanence encoded in the fabric of a major estate, the one under scrutiny here fell prey to human folly and mismanagement. The extent to which this was the result of poor estate management will be

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<sup>119</sup> Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, p.403.

<sup>120</sup> Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, p.403.

carefully considered in this thesis. Moreover, the extent to which these difficulties proved detrimental to the reputation of Wanstead's owners, and their claim to elite social status, will also be explored.

One consolation for our lack of access to Richard Child's finished property is that the process of piecing together the creation of his house draws attention to the lengthy process of design and construction, and how that process was viewed and experienced at the time. Had Wanstead survived, and become a heritage site, its appearance would inevitably have become fixed at a particular moment in time, providing a snapshot of the eighteenth-century country house. Whilst impressions of the country house as an unchanging environment are common, they can sit in tension with the eighteenth-century country house as in a constant state of flux and reconceptualisation.

The lengthy process of furnishing the country house, or improving a landscape, can sometimes get lost in accounts that privilege the stylistic or biographical canon, as these tend to focus only on one particular period, rather than broader developments. The importance of understanding the country house in this manner was most recently brought to attention in a conference at the National Gallery in March 2015, entitled *Animating the Eighteenth-Century Country House*. This conference emphasised that, through the use of diaries, letters, visitor accounts, inventories, sales catalogues and account books, these properties might be revitalised and more accurately understood as spaces subject to constant development.



To what extent have historians contributed to this tendency to ‘freeze’ the eighteenth-century country house at a particular moment in time? Dana Arnold suggests that the tendency amongst early twentieth-century architectural historians, such as John Summerson, to discuss the country house largely within the stylistic canon has limited our understanding of these residences.<sup>121</sup> As outlined in my historiographical discussion, above, much that has been written about Wanstead has indeed been predominantly concerned with stylistic issues, and biographical studies of the designers involved. This has been detrimental to our understanding of the house and its landscape, and the ways in which its owners constantly responded to the ever-evolving tastes and ideas of eighteenth-century society.

Mark Girouard’s pioneering *Life in the English Country House* (1974) promoted a socio-historical approach by outlining developments in country house design within the context of broader change. He told, as ‘no one has told before, how houses functioned and how form and function are interrelated’.<sup>122</sup> In doing so, Girouard emphasised country houses as dynamic and evolving spaces; as far from static architectural structures: ‘A country house was an expensive piece of plant which needed constant alteration as well as constant maintenance if it were to continue to fulfil its functions.’<sup>123</sup> Girouard’s comments emphasise that,

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<sup>121</sup> D. Arnold, *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Stroud, 2003) p.1.

<sup>122</sup> J. Harris, ‘Review of *The Making of the English Country House 1500-1640*; *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History*; the Country House in English Renaissance Poetry’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol 38, No. 2 (May 1979), pp.197–98; Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*.

<sup>123</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.3.

discussing a site purely within the stylistic terms of a particular period, can only partially indicate its wider significance. According to John Harris, it was Girouard's study which helped to remove the country house from containment within 'a stylistic container or quarry for motif mongers'.<sup>124</sup>

Subsequent studies of the eighteenth-century interior by Peter Thornton, Charles Saumarez Smith and Hannah Greig have drawn on visual evidence to emphasise the importance of various moments within the development of a home, presenting images of interiors in chronological order.<sup>125</sup> By doing so, they draw attention to the constant evolution of style and taste in furnishings and decoration. This does help to amplify the dynamic and changing nature of interiors during the eighteenth century - although, as discussed above, visual sources require careful analysis when being treated as a possible source of historical evidence. Furthermore, the wide variety of sources, beyond the pictorial, that survives for Wanstead necessarily ensures that the historian has to attend to the evolving and changing nature of the house and grounds. Referring to other kinds of material evidence helps to give us a clearer understanding of when improvements were made, by which owner, and the factors likely to have prompted these developments. By doing so, we can achieve a broader understanding of the eighteenth-century country house interior.

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<sup>124</sup> Harris, 'Review', p.197.

<sup>125</sup> See: P. Thornton, *Authentic Décor: the domestic interior 1620-1920* (London, 1993); C. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, 1993). For a discussion on the wide array of representations of the eighteenth-century English interior in image and text and the central role interiors played in evaluations of status and identity during the Georgian period see H. Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century English Interiors in Image and Text' in *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, eds J. Aynsley and C. Grant (London, 2006), pp.102-127.

A related issue is that the evolution of the estate landscape, and the relationship between the house and that landscape, has been neglected in many of the discussions noted above. John Dixon Hunt, Ann Bermingham, Roy Strong, and Timothy Mowl have all addressed important developments in landscape design throughout the eighteenth century, connecting them with broader social change.<sup>126</sup> But, while these discussions have moved beyond the purely stylistic, effectively situating developments within the context of evolving attitudes and philosophies, they have generally been conducted separately to considerations of architecture and design. As a result, the relationship between house and landscape has often been overlooked.

Tom Williamson has observed that to divorce the study of the country house from that of the estate landscape, as is commonly the case, would appear absurd from a contemporary perspective.<sup>127</sup> This is not least because landscape and building schemes were often contemporaneous, and the design of the house commonly influenced the layout of the surrounding landscape, and vice versa. Consideration of how the landscape was viewed from inside the house is also important. The ways in which architectural developments or those within the country house interior related to surrounding landscapes therefore requires much fuller investigation. This thesis investigates the relationships between

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<sup>126</sup> T. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in eighteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995); J. Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting, and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1976); J. Dixon Hunt, *Garden History: issues, approaches and methods* (Washington, 1992); A. Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (California, 1986); R. Strong, *The Artist and the Garden* (London and New Haven, 2000); T. Mowl, *Gentlemen Players: Gardens of the English landscape* (Stroud, 2000).

<sup>127</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.18.

architecture and landscape, between behavioural codes, social norms and the development of the estate at Wanstead. My study of Wanstead aims to bridge the gap between house and landscape by demonstrating how changes in the landscape responded to changes within Wanstead House and vice versa, as well as to the ever-changing ideological concerns of its owners and wider Georgian society.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one will begin with a brief history of the estate, highlighting the significance of the Wanstead site prior to Josiah Child's acquisition in the late seventeenth century. The chapter will then discuss his purchase of 1673, considering the factors that enabled this acquisition and Child's possible motivations. Chapter one will also outline the financial means by which Child was able to maintain the Wanstead estate, and the extent to which he complied with contemporary expectations of estate management, regarding the practices of sociability and hospitality. Finally, I will consider improvements carried out at Wanstead during the late seventeenth century. Child did not make any architectural changes to the Elizabethan manor, but he did, however, begin working on extensive landscape improvements. I will evaluate why Child may have prioritised work on the grounds over developing the building, and the implications of this for the estate. Themes of status and geographical location will be prominent in this chapter, as I explore the ways in which Child's acquisition of Wanstead was instrumental in the improvement of his social status and that of his descendants.

Chapter two charts the improvements carried out at Wanstead by Josiah's third son, Richard Child, later Viscount Castlemaine and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, between his inheritance in 1704 and the completion of the construction of Campbell's design for Wanstead House. The chapter will begin by assessing Richard's inheritance, his political and social status, and his marriage to Dorothy, the daughter and heiress of John Glynne of Henley Park, Surrey and Francis Tylney of Rotherwick.<sup>128</sup> I will then explore the improvements carried out at Wanstead during the first half of the eighteenth century, underlining themes of social status and the impact this had upon the development of Wanstead during this period. The first to take place were a number of developments in the landscape, carried out by London and Wise between 1706 and 1715.

These improvements were soon followed by the commissioning of Colen Campbell to rebuild Wanstead House as a classical mansion. My discussion of Campbell's employment at Wanstead will address possible reasons for Child's patronage of this young architect, as well as a detailed discussion of the publication of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, which featured three elevations, two floor plans and a section for the house. These will be examined in order to assess stylistic influences on Wanstead, and what these designs might tell us about the patron. Following this, I will highlight the influence of Campbell's designs for Wanstead on later country houses built during the eighteenth century.

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<sup>128</sup> Glynne seems to have supported the Parliamentarians during the Civil War and held local office under the Commonwealth and Protectorates. Dorothy's grandfather was originally from Norfolk and bought the manor of Rotherwick in 1629. For Glynne see: K. Lindley, 'Glynne, Sir John (1603-1666)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/10843](http://www.oxforddnb.com/ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/10843), accessed 13 June 2015.

Chapter three will address the second phase of Richard Child's ownership, between 1720 and his death in 1750. Significant developments during this period included the furnishing of the Wanstead interior, mostly carried out by William Kent. Due to the constraints of space, as well as of the primary sources, this discussion will focus on three of the principal rooms at Wanstead House: the great hall; the ballroom; the saloon. Following the completion of the new house, a second phase of landscape improvements took place, and the chapter will also consider these in some detail. These included the introduction of serpentine, wildernesses, an amphitheatre, a fortification and a grotto. The improvements that will be discussed in chapters two and three effectively highlight the need to consider the estate as always evolving, and draw attention to eighteenth-century estate as a mutable and constantly developing space.

Chapter four discusses the three ownerships of Wanstead which fell between 1750 and 1824. These were all considerably shorter and less active than those of Josiah Child and his son, Richard. These ownerships highlight the implications of estate management for social status during the second half of the eighteenth century. Following Richard's death in 1750, his son, John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, inherited the estate. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl spent a significant amount of time living overseas in Florence. I will address contemporary perceptions of his absence, and the implications of this for Wanstead. This will be followed by a discussion of a few landscape developments, which were, despite John's residence overseas, carried out at Wanstead during this period - perhaps as an attempt to maintain some sense of the owner's physical presence.

The next ownership to be addressed in chapter four is that of James Tylney Long, who inherited Wanstead in 1785. His period of ownership, lasting until his death in 1795, is the briefest of those under discussion in this thesis. When Tylney Long inherited the estate from his uncle, John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, he decided to remain at his more humble residence, Draycot Cerne in Wiltshire. A brief discussion as to why this may have been the case raises questions about contemporary owners' perception of great country houses, and the extent to which they might, or might not, serve effectively as family residences.

Finally, chapter four will discuss James Tylney Long's daughter, Catherine's inheritance of the Wanstead estate and her efforts to revive the Wanstead interior prior to her marriage to William Wellesley Pole in 1812. Upon arriving at Wanstead, the newly married couple wasted little time in setting to work on improving the estate. Once again, this discussion will underline the continual evolution of such estates, demonstrating the ways in which they were subject to change. Work on Wanstead at this time shows a desire to comply with the shifting trends of high society, and also raises issues about the relationship between Wanstead and London. This included commissioning Humphry Repton and Lewis Kennedy to propose improvements for the landscape, as well as making amendments to the Wanstead interior, such as the introduction of a fine collection of French furniture.

Chapter four will close by outlining the implications these improvements had upon the estate finances, and exploring how Wanstead became subject to such considerable financial decline that the sale of the entire contents of the house had

to be arranged. The effects this had upon the status of Wanstead and its owners will also be considered. Closing this chapter with a discussion of the 1822 sales will draw attention once again to the overarching theme of this thesis; the historical reconstruction of a lost eighteenth-century estate.



## Chapter One: 1676-1699

### Josiah Child

#### ***Waenstede: A Brief History of the Wanstead Estate***

It is important to begin this chapter by providing a brief outline of Wanstead's early history in order to demonstrate the significance of the site and the appeal it is likely to have held for an aspiring merchant like Josiah Child in the late seventeenth century. Aristocratic landowners had the luxury of inheriting family estates, heirlooms, familial ties, lineage and pre-existing wealth, to enforce and support their social standing and superiority. A newly moneyed landowner, however, lacked such advantages, and the possibility of drawing on the pre-existing histories of a recently acquired property as a means of establishing his position would surely have been attractive. Whilst Josiah Child had no previous connections with Wanstead, he was able, nonetheless, to assert his status through his acquisition of this historically significant site.

In the Domesday survey of 1066, Wanstead was recorded as *Waenstede*, deriving from the Old English *waen*, 'waggon' and *stede*, 'place'. It seems that there was once a ford there, where wagons crossed a stream and, as '*stede*' usually suggested a holy place, Wanstead effectively means 'to the holy place, near the ford crossed by wagons'.<sup>1</sup> William Tegg's *A Sketch of Wanstead Park and the House which formerly stood there*, published to celebrate the opening of Wanstead Park by the Corporation of London in

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<sup>1</sup> C. Harris, *What's in a name? Meanings of London Underground Stations* (London, 2001), p.73.

1882, provided a slightly different translation of ‘Wanstead’, but likewise referred to its extensive history:

The name “Wanstead” is supposed to mean “White Mansion”, indicating that in Saxon times there was a house of some note... Wanstead Flats on the east are bounded by Wanstead Park and until the Corporation of the City of London purchased the property it was used for farm purposes, but for centuries it was a place of note.<sup>2</sup>

Archaeological evidence dating from the Roman and Saxon periods indicates that there had been a high amount of activity on the site prior to the Domesday survey. The discovery of Roman pottery and other material suggests evidence of a villa at Wanstead, but its specific location is currently unknown. Compass Archaeology’s 2013 survey of the site records that the collection of pottery and coins found during excavations indicates that occupation at Wanstead during this period peaked in the fourth century.<sup>3</sup> (The discovery of fragments from a Roman villa during the construction of Campbell’s mansion in 1715 is fitting for an estate that imitated elements of ancient Italian styles and architectural methods.)

Throughout the Middle Ages, Tudor and Elizabethan periods, the manor, or rather, the site of the manor at Wanstead passed through a number of owners. Wanstead’s proximity to the River Roding and an ancient Roman road leading

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<sup>2</sup> W. Tegg, *A Sketch of Wanstead Park and of the House which formerly stood there* (London, 1882), p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Compass Archaeology, *Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, London Borough of Redbridge* (September 2014), p.10.

into London made the site an ideal location (fig. 32). A full study of Wanstead's early history is too lengthy for the specific purposes of this thesis. This chronological account will, therefore, begin the discussion in 1578, when Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, one of Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> closest courtiers, acquired the manor.

Leicester's residence on the Strand in London and Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire provided him with the all-important properties of town and country house. However, Queen Elizabeth's preference for moving between the Thames-side palaces made ownership of a major central London residence and a suburban residence essential for the greater court figures wishing to secure or enhance their political standing at her court.<sup>4</sup> Wanstead's proximity to London and Elizabeth's palace at Greenwich was an undoubtedly significant aspect of its appeal.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there are numerous other reports of earlier royal visits to Wanstead by Henry VIII, Mary I and James I.<sup>6</sup>

The acquisition of Wanstead therefore provided Dudley with a suburban residence, suitable for royal visits, making his 'trio [of properties] complete', whilst also securing his own political standing.<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>'s habit of making regular tours across England to visit the various residences of her

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<sup>4</sup> S. Adams ed., *Household Accounts and Disbursement books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1558-1561, 1584-1586* (Cambridge, 1995), p.26.

<sup>5</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, p.26; See also: Tegg, *Sketch of Wanstead Park* and the Compass survey.

<sup>6</sup> M. Parsons, 'Wanstead' in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Essex*, ed. W.R. Powell, Vol. 4 (Oxford, 1976), pp.324-325.

<sup>7</sup> E. Goldring, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London and New Haven, 2014), p.206.

courtiers was a means of strengthening relations and disseminating influence. To receive a royal visit was a primary objective for a country house owner in the period, and this consequently fuelled a major interest in country house planning.<sup>8</sup> On account of Dudley's position at court, and his personal relationship with Elizabeth, regular royal visits to Wanstead took place. Evidence of Dudley's efforts to ensure that Wanstead was in fit condition to receive these visits can be seen throughout his household accounts for 1585, in which year several payments were made towards building activities and gardening.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the landscape was an important element of the property that required considerable maintenance. On one visit, the grounds of the estate were used to dramatic effect in the staging of a play by the Elizabethan poet, Sir Phillip Sidney. Sidney's description records that 'six shepherds and others were seen dragging the damsel who is designated as "The Lady of May" towards the Queen from the Wanstead wood'.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to entertaining royal visitors, Leicester is likely to have taken part in other forms of sociability with fellow courtiers on a regular basis. Payments

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<sup>8</sup> A. Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: Country House Visiting Through the Centuries* (London, 1998), p.19.

<sup>9</sup> Simon Adams records a payment made in April 1585 'by your lordships commandment imprest for wourk at Wansted.' Two months later, Charles Wednestor, Dudley's auditor, received money to pay Richard Browne and the engineer Thomas Bedwell around thirty eight pounds for the building charges at Wanstead (p.259). See: Adams, *Household Accounts*, p.244. Further references to payments are recorded until November that year, 'Payd by your lorship's commandment to Thomas wich he payd to on[e] Ewre a carver at Wansted upon a pese a work which he doth for your lordship at Wansted the v day of November 1585 about the condet.' See: Adams, *Household Accounts*, p.329.

<sup>10</sup> J. Hyrn, 'Wanstead House: Elizabeth', *The Calcutta Journal of Politics and General Literature*, Vol. 1, Issue 38, (February 1823), pp.599-600.

made on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1584 ‘to the musicians who came from London to Wanstead’<sup>11</sup>, and on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1585 ‘for the hire of vj horses for the mewscyians from London to Wansted’, suggest that he regularly entertained at the property.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, throughout the disbursement book of 1584-86, regular payments were also made to settle the Earl’s losses at card playing, an entertainment often held at Wanstead.<sup>13</sup> These payments evidence his gambling habits, which presumably contributed to his considerable debts later in life, somewhat prefiguring the fateful downfall of Wanstead’s final owners in 1822.

There are only three currently known sources that shed light on the appearance of the manor during this period, but all offer partial views, providing only tantalising clues about the appearance and use of Wanstead during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The earliest painted view associated with Wanstead is a portrait of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>, dated circa 1585, attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (fig. 33). In 1796, in the fourth volume of *The Environs of London*, Daniel Lyson says this of the portrait: ‘Old Wanstead House is introduced in the background of a picture of Queen Elizabeth at Welbeck.’<sup>14</sup> This raises the possibility that this picture was once in the possession of Dudley.

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<sup>11</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, p.178.

<sup>12</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, p.238.

<sup>13</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, pp.196, 200. On 17<sup>th</sup> November 1584: ‘Your lorshipe lost in play at Wansted’ and, again, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1584, ‘Your lordshipe lost at plaie at Wanstead the xjth of December.’

<sup>14</sup> D. Lyson, *The environs of London: being an historical account of the towns, villages and hamlets within twelve miles of the capital*, 4 vols (London, 1792), IV, p.235. The portrait has

As Leicester was heavily in debt at the time of his death in 1588, a large proportion of his possessions, including his impressive art collection, were sold.<sup>15</sup> This dispersal, and lack of information regarding the destination of the works of art, makes it difficult to determine whether the Gheeraerts portrait was in Leicester's collection or not. A piece by William Thoms in *Notes and Queries*, published in 1862, does provide a transcription of the inventories made for all three of Leicester's residences.<sup>16</sup> And, included in the Wanstead inventory, are portraits of 'King Henry the Eight, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Marye.'<sup>17</sup> The inventories made for the other two properties, Kenilworth and Leicester House in London, also list portraits of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>, but, again, neither the artists' names nor comments on the settings are recorded. Given Leicester's position at court, it is of little surprise that royal portraits hung at each of his residences, but whether the Earl commissioned a portrait that depicted the Queen at Wanstead remains unclear.

Moreover, recent studies of Elizabethan portraiture which discuss this painting make no reference to the setting as at Wanstead. Roy Strong's *The Artist and the Garden* (2000) only entitles the painting: 'Queen Elizabeth with

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occasionally been referred to as the 'Welbeck' portrait on account of its current location at Welbeck Abbey. According to Karen Hearn, Matthew Prior bequeathed this painting in 1721 to Henrietta Cavendish-Holles, wife of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford. It was first recorded at her house in 1747; thence by descent. See: K. Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England* (London, 1995), p.86.

<sup>15</sup> E. Goldring, 'The Earl of Leicester and portraits of the Duc d'Alencon', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 46 (February 2004), p.109.

<sup>16</sup> W.J Thoms, 'Pictures of the great Earl of Leicester', *Notes and Queries*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series (1862).

<sup>17</sup> Thoms, 'Pictures of the great Earl of Leicester', p.225.

a view to a walled garden'.<sup>18</sup> Strong notes the architecture of the arcade in the background as similar to that in the portrait of Elizabeth at Siena, attributed to Quentin Metsys the Younger (1543-1589) (fig. 34). Whilst this raises questions regarding the attribution, Karen Hearn's study confirms that the painting is by Gheeraerts, thanks to the signature 'MGF'; 'Marcus Gheeraerts Fecit.'<sup>19</sup> Hearn, however, also disregards the idea that the portrait is set at Wanstead, entitling the painting simply as 'Elizabeth 1 c.1580-85'.<sup>20</sup> It is Hearn's belief that Gheeraerts was living in Antwerp at the time of the painting's production, and this greatly weakens the case for Wanstead as the locale in the picture.

However, even though the identification of the setting in this portrait as Wanstead seems less than likely, there do remain interesting similarities between the scene in Gheeraerts's portrait and the Wanstead manor. The cloistered passage depicted in the background of the painting is similar to that depicted in Johann Kip and Leonard Knyff's view to the north (fig. 30). However, as Strong's comparison to the 'Sieve portrait' of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> in Siena demonstrates, this was a common architectural feature during this period. Another similarity can be seen in the knotted garden and gravel pathways depicted in the background of the portrait. Evidence of such gardens at Wanstead can again be found in Leicester's accounts for 1585, which list a payment made in April 'to fower gardeneirs which made and sett a knot in the

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<sup>18</sup> R. Strong, *The Artist and the Garden* (London and New Haven, 2000), p.26.

<sup>19</sup> Hearn, *Dynasties*, p. 86. Hearn also notes that the 'MGF' monogram is identical to that on two drawings by Gheeraerts the elder in the Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam.

<sup>20</sup> K. Hearn, *Marcus Gheeraerts II: Elizabethan Artist* (London, 2002), p.33.

garden at Wansted' and, three months later, another to the gardener Thomas Gouffe for 'graveling the garden at Wansted'.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, given the lack of evidence, Gheeraerts's portrait is thus most probably significant to this study as providing a broad insight into the architectural and garden fashions belonging to this kind of manor during this period, rather than as an actual image of Wanstead.

Following Leicester's death, the estate was owned by Sir Henry Mildmay, master of the King's Jewel House and one of the judges at the trial of Charles I in 1619; and later by his son-in-law, Sir Robert Brooke, who purchased the estate in December 1661.<sup>22</sup> Shortly after, Robert died childless by drowning in the River Rhône. No significant architectural developments appear to have been carried out by Mildmay or Brooke during this period, thus leading Samuel Pepys to describe Wanstead in 1665 as 'a fine seat, but an old fashioned house and being not full of people, looks desolately'.<sup>23</sup>

### **Josiah Child's purchase and maintenance of the Wanstead estate**

Josiah Child's acquisition of the Wanstead estate introduces one of the most prominent themes of this thesis: social status. It is important to understand Child's upwardly rising career and his acquisition of Wanstead, not as a 'rags

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<sup>21</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, pp.178, 279.

<sup>22</sup> Sir Henry Mildmay purchased the house for £7,300. Mildmay was master of the King's Jewel House and one of the judges at the trial of Charles I. Because of his role in the trial, Wanstead was seized from his ownership as punishment when Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660. During this period, it was common for the monarch to sanction or remove owners from their property. Although the estate was removed from Mildmay, his son-in-law, Sir Robert Brooke, eventually purchased it.

<sup>23</sup> R. Latham ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection* (London, 2003), p.490.



to riches' history, but rather as the advancement of an aspirant, middling and skilled entrepreneur.

Previous scholars have maintained that Child's father was a London merchant who acquired considerable wealth, bought property in Bedfordshire, and was appointed Sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1640.<sup>24</sup> However, although Child was the son of *a* Richard Child, a merchant of Fleet Street, there is no evidence to suggest he was in fact the son of the Sheriff, nor that he came from any substantial wealth.<sup>25</sup> But, as the son of a merchant, Child is nonetheless likely to have grown up in a well-to-do middling family, and, as was common amongst his peers, to have begun his career as a merchant's apprentice. Evidence for this can be found in diarist John Evelyn's description of Child in 1683 as being 'from an ordinary Merchants Apprentice, & managements of the E. India Comp: Stock, being arrived to an Estate of (tis said) £200,000 pounds'.<sup>26</sup>

Child's mercantile career highlights the considerable fortunes that could potentially be made through a career in trade during the late seventeenth century. In 1701, Daniel Defoe wrote of the increasing wealth and ease of upward social mobility in his publication, *The Trueborn Englishman*: 'Wealth, howsoever got, in England makes Lords of merchants, gentlemen of rakes. Antiquity and birth are needless here, 'Tis imprudence and money that

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<sup>24</sup> R. Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah, first baronet', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, [www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/5290](http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/5290) , accessed 8 March 2013, hereafter ODNB; H.R Fox Bourne, *English Merchants* (London, 1886).

<sup>25</sup> W. Letwin, *Sir Josiah Child, Merchant Economist* (Cambridge, 1959), p.12.

<sup>26</sup> E.S de Beer ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols (Oxford, 2000), IV, p.305.

makes a peer.'<sup>27</sup> Whilst social mobility was driven by the new wealth brought about by trade expansion in the seventeenth century, the on-going selling of land by the monarch in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in order to finance war and weather economic difficulties also provided new opportunities for those wishing to improve status through land ownership.<sup>28</sup> Lawrence and Jeanne Stone's study of the English elite between 1540 and 1880 assesses the extent to which elite society was in fact 'open' to social mobility. According to their study, the purchase of an already established country house or the inheritance of a smaller property, which could be enlarged, was a key means of obtaining status.<sup>29</sup> Likewise Alan Mackley and Richard Wilson have commented that the acquisition or construction of a country house was 'the most obvious way, in a highly wealth-conscious society, by which the affluent could demonstrate their great riches and success to the world'.<sup>30</sup>

Peter Earle states that the dream of owning a landed estate and becoming a country gentleman has traditionally been considered a major motivation amongst the middling London class.<sup>31</sup> Child's acquisition of a property within close proximity to London and the East India docks was, to an extent, representative of the wealthy mercantile classes who purchased properties

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<sup>27</sup> D. Defoe, *The Trueborn Englishman: A Satyr* (London, 1701), p.12.

<sup>28</sup> C.G.A Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700* (Cambridge, 1984), p.142.

<sup>29</sup> L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540- 1880* (Oxford, 1984), p.8.

<sup>30</sup> A. Mackley and R. Wilson, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (London, 2000), p.46.

<sup>31</sup> P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), p.152.

within easy reach of the city, whilst also adopting a degree of the lifestyle of the landed elite. This is demonstrated by Henry Overton's map of Essex (1713), which depicts other properties belonging to merchants nearby, acquired after Child's purchase (fig. 32). These include Copped Hall, purchased by Sir Thomas Webster, the son of a wealthy merchant, in 1700 for £13,500 from Charles Sackville, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dorset.<sup>32</sup>

However, the acquisition of an estate like Copped Hall or Wanstead was in fact rather distinct from other mercantile properties. Earle's data indicates that, out of his selected sample of the London mercantile class for the years between 1660 and 1730, eighteen middling men owned properties worth between £2000 and £5000, and only eight owned properties worth over £5000.<sup>33</sup> These statistics indicate that Child's purchase of a manor worth £11,500 was rare, even amongst the topmost echelons of businessmen.<sup>34</sup>

It is also important to note that a number of studies contradict a previously supposed universal desire amongst the mercantile elite to enter into the landed gentry. According to Nicholas Rogers, urban society did not necessarily comprise transient members anxious to leave the counting house for the country seat.<sup>35</sup> Instead, he commented that, where entry into higher circles did

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<sup>32</sup> British Library Maps Collection, K.Top.13.2, A New Map of the County of Essex by Henry Overton (1713). Hereafter BL Maps; C. Whittick, 'Webster family (*per. c.* 1650–1836)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74132](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74132), accessed 13 January 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, p.153.

<sup>34</sup> M. R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England 1680-1780* (London, 1996), p.3.

<sup>35</sup> N. Rogers, 'Money, Land and Lineage: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', *Social History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (October 1979), p.447.

occur, it was due to the increasing numbers of city businessmen marrying daughters of the landed gentry. This, he proposed, was indicative of wider structural shifts in society, rather than an active attempt amongst the business elite to move away from city life.<sup>36</sup>

Michael Mascuch has also cautioned that the tendency to assume that a middling person during the early modern period actively desired change in social status is based on little empirical analysis.<sup>37</sup> He has argued that the fear of falling into poverty by overspending was often greater than the desire to enter the landed elite, thus defining the parameters of social mobility.<sup>38</sup> Certainly, the fear of being distant from business in the city whilst residing at a country seat, and the potential drain on one's capital this may have resulted in, kept many business men from adopting an 'aristocratic lifestyle'.<sup>39</sup> Child's purchase of the Wanstead estate thus indicates a flourishing, but somewhat unusual position; 'from this time on, Child began to enjoy the reputation of uncommon wealth'.<sup>40</sup>

We need to identify the sources of finance required for such a major acquisition. Unlike those who inherited their fortunes and estates, Child was largely responsible for his own financial success. There are three factors that appear to have enabled the acquisition of Wanstead: Child's mercantile

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<sup>36</sup> Rogers, 'Money, Land and Lineage', p.446.

<sup>37</sup> M. Mascuch, 'Social Mobility and Middling Self-Identity: The Ethos of British Autobiographers, 1600-1750', *Social History*, Vol. 20, No.1 (January 1995), p.47.

<sup>38</sup> Mascuch, 'Social Mobility and Middling Self-Identity', p.61.

<sup>39</sup> Hunt, *Middling Sort*, p.3.

<sup>40</sup> Letwin, *Sir Josiah Child*, p.16.

career; his ownership of other landed properties; and his marriages. These must also be recognised as sources of income that additionally assisted in the subsequent maintenance of the estate. Land was a secure investment, but it needed to be supported by other financial means in order to remain stable.

When Child acquired Wanstead in 1673, he owned only a small portion in stocks in the East India Company. By 1675, he had become a major shareholder, owning £12,000 worth of stock. By 1679, this had significantly increased to a substantial sum of £23,000, the largest single block of shares in the Company.<sup>41</sup> His upwardly rising position in the East India Company can also be seen in his position as Governor between 1681 and 1683, and as Deputy Governor from 1684 until 1686, and again between 1688 and 1690. Whilst Child is best known for his role in the Company, this was thus not a major source of wealth until *after* the purchase of Wanstead. It was not one of the driving factors that led to the acquisition of the estate. Child did, however, demonstrate entrepreneurial skill as early as 1650, when he undertook to carry ships' provisions from Plymouth to Lisbon on behalf of the parliamentary fleet.<sup>42</sup> In 1653, he acted as agent for the Admiralty commissions and, in 1655, he served as deputy to the navy's treasurer of Portsmouth, handling transfers of cash and prize money.<sup>43</sup> Shortly after the Restoration, Child

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<sup>41</sup> R. Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah, first baronet', *ODNB*, [www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/5290](http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/5290), accessed 8 March 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah'.

<sup>43</sup> Letwin, *Sir Josiah Child*, p.12; A. Hotson, *Late Stuart moneyed men and their patronage of sculpture and architecture, circa 1660-1720* (unpublished PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2006), p.138.

returned to London and opened a brewery in Southwark, supplying beer to the navy and the monarch.<sup>44</sup>

One year prior to his acquisition of Wanstead, Child formed a partnership with Samuel Bache, a merchant in Port Royal, and together they built a sugar works plantation of 1,330 acres in Jamaica.<sup>45</sup> Child's role was to supply the necessary servants, slaves and supplies, while Bache undertook the direction of the plantation. The profits made were to be shared equally, and both men entered into penal bonds of £10,000.<sup>46</sup> That same year Child, Thomas Papillon, Thomas Littleton and several others were partners in the navy victualing contract, a partnership that may have become particularly profitable when the third Dutch war broke out.<sup>47</sup> These financial assets would have made a significant contribution to Child's wealth. They also help to underscore the importance and significance of Child acquiring a country seat within easy reach of London, where he could access the city easily in order to see to his business affairs.

Although Child was somewhat unusual in the scale of his acquisition, he was, on the other hand, fairly typical of the mercantile elite who recognised the importance of and, moreover, took pride in their status as affluent London

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<sup>44</sup> J.P Ferris, 'Child, Josiah (c.1630-99) of Wanstead, Essex', History of Parliament Online, [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/child-josiah-1630-99](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/child-josiah-1630-99), accessed 6 February 2014. Hereafter HOP.

<sup>45</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah'; Ferris, 'Child, Josiah'; R.B Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Kingston, 1994), p.271.

<sup>46</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, p.271.

<sup>47</sup> Letwin, *Sir Josiah Child*, p.16.

businessmen. Child did not neglect his business duties after acquiring land. Indeed, in his 1688 publication, *A New Discourse on Trade*, he described land and trade as ‘twins’ that ‘have always and ever will wax and wane together’, and argued in favour of the conversion of capital into land and property.<sup>48</sup> He published a number of writings on the subject of trade, and continued his involvement in this business until his death in 1699.<sup>49</sup>

A second source of Child’s economic income was landed investments. The ownership of land would have enabled Child to acquire Wanstead, but it also provided the means to maintain the estate. It is difficult to identify which land Child acquired prior to 1673. In his will, dated 1696, several properties are listed, including Royden Hall, Bois Hall, Abells and Temple Hall. Child states that Royden Hall and Temple Hall were purchased from the Earl of Salisbury in 1694.<sup>50</sup> It is unclear, however, whether Bois Hall (fig. 35) and Abells were purchased before or after the acquisition of Wanstead. Had they been acquired at an earlier date, then the income that these properties generated is likely to have contributed to the purchase of Wanstead. However, if they were acquired after, then they are rather indicative of what seems to have been Child’s effective ‘colonisation’ of Essex and his expanding political influence in the

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<sup>48</sup> See preface to: J. Child, *A New Discourse on Trade* (London, 1688).

<sup>49</sup> See also: J. Child, *Brief Observations concerning trade and interest of money* (London, 1668); J. Child, *A Short addition to the observations concerning trade and interest of money. By the same hand* (London, 1668); J. Child, *An Essay on wool and woollen manufacture, for the improvement of trade* (London, 1693); J. Child, *An Essay of the nature, use and advantages of trade* (London, 1694); J. Child, *The Great honour and advantage of the East-India trade to the kingdom, asserted* (London, 1697).

<sup>50</sup> National Archives PROB 11/451/289, ‘Will of Sir Josiah Child of Wanstead, Essex, February 1696, p.7. Hereafter NA.

area.<sup>51</sup> Although such investments offered relatively modest economic return, they were nonetheless important as an economic factor in Child's activities and, perhaps more importantly, further boosted his political influence.

The third contributing factor towards Child's financial position, prior to the Wanstead acquisition, is his marriage to daughters of affluent mercantile families. From a somewhat cynical perspective, this represented an important source of additional capital. According to Alistair Strickson, financial considerations were a major significance for those in need of consolidating their elite position and landed wealth.<sup>52</sup> Whilst it is difficult to ascertain Child's reasons behind his choice of wives, it cannot be denied that those marital unions contributed considerably to his overall wealth.

Child's first marriage was to Hannah Boate in 1654. She was the daughter of Edward Boate, a master shipwright of Portsmouth, whom Child is likely to have met whilst serving as deputy treasurer for the navy. After 1600, marriage portions were rising steeply, primarily due to the large sums offered by lawyers, merchants and other moneyed men, therefore making their daughters highly desirable propositions. We can assume that Child received a fairly substantial portion when he married Hannah.

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<sup>51</sup> Child served as deputy lieutenant in April, 1688, as sheriff to Essex between November 1688-9, Commissioner for Assessment, 1679-80 and as MP for Petersfield (1658-1659), Dartmouth (Feb 1673) and Ludlow (1685). See: Ferris, 'Child, Josiah'.

<sup>52</sup> A.L Strickson, 'Common Law versus Common Practice: The Use of Marriage Settlements in Early Modern England', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (February 1990), pp.21-39.



This first marriage was, however, short lived, as Hannah died in 1662. Following her death, Child appears to have been eager to remarry, perhaps in pursuit of a second substantial portion that would further enhance his financial assets. The following year, in 1663, Child married his second wife, Mary Stone, daughter of William Attwood of Hackney and widow of Thomas Stone, a London merchant. Mary Stone's status as a widow meant that she possessed financial assets that provided Child with a generous portion. He received £3,000, plus £250 and household goods.<sup>53</sup> Crucially, Child's marriages to such merchants' daughters and widows indicates that he was considered to be an appropriate choice of husband amongst the mercantile elite, providing some insight into his social standing at this time.

The economic advantages to be gained from marrying a widow were seductive for those wishing to obtain status. The financial assets obtainable from marriage in the seventeenth century are further demonstrated by Child's third marriage, to Emma, widow of Sir Francis Willoughby of Wollaton, Nottinghamshire, and second daughter and co-heiress of Sir Henry Barnard, a Turkey merchant of Stoke and Bridgenorth, in 1676.<sup>54</sup> Through this marriage, Child was able to generate additional wealth, which no doubt contributed significantly to the upkeep of the Wanstead estate. Emma's first marriage to Sir Francis Willoughby is likely to have provided her with a generous dowry for widowhood and a substantial third portion for Child. Her daughter, Cassandra Willoughby, later referred to a number of episodes when Child had

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<sup>53</sup> R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family and Business in the English Speaking World* (Cambridge, 2001), p.146.

<sup>54</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah'.

attempted to manipulate her mother, and take advantage of the family's financial assets:

Sir Josia Child had hitherto received the produce of my brothers estate out of which he would allow my bro<sup>r</sup> such a proportion as he thought fit for him to spend, which was less than my bro<sup>r</sup> would now be contented with: and therefore in order to get possession of more he made complaint to the Lord Chancellor Jevffrys, and also brought into court and action against Sir Josia Child for cutting down timber and for other waists upon my mothers' jointure.<sup>55</sup>

Cassandra's accounts indicate Child's marriage to Emma to have been economically strategic, his attempts to take advantage of his wife's fortune suggesting that he was continually seeking to enhance his wealth by whatever means possible.<sup>56</sup>

'Good housekeeping is a thing in all Gentlemen required.'<sup>57</sup>

In 1683, Evelyn offered a highly critical description of Wanstead, describing it as 'a cursed barren spot, where commonly these overgrowne men seat themselves'.<sup>58</sup> Five years earlier, Josiah had been made a baronet, but unease stimulated by rapid social mobility surely enforced the need amongst such newly moneyed men to behave appropriately, manage their estates effectively,

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<sup>55</sup> C. Brydges, Duchess of Chandos, *The Continuation of the History of The Willoughby Family*, ed. A.C Wood (Eton, 1958), p.124.

<sup>56</sup> Brydges, *History of The Willoughby Family*, p. 119. Despite Child's efforts, Francis Willoughby appears to have secured his rights to the Wollaton estate, where he, Cassandra and Thomas eventually returned.

<sup>57</sup> As quoted in F. Heal, *Hospitality in the Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), p.23.

<sup>58</sup> Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, p.306.

and to suit contemporary ideals.<sup>59</sup> A core duty expected of a country house owner was the display of hospitality. The notion of hospitality had become a duty that ‘demanded a particular public space for its performance’, such as ‘the great hall of the country house’.<sup>60</sup> In his 1624 publication, *The Elements of Architecture*, Henry Wotton emphasised the significance of a country house as an arena for its owner to best display himself:

Every mans proper Mansion house and home, being the theatre of his Hospitality, the seat of self-fruition, the Comfortablest part of his own life, the Noblest of his sons inheritance, a kind of private principedom; Nay to the Possessors thereof an Epitome of the whole World; may well deserve by these Attributes, according to the degree of the master, to be decently and delightfully adorned.<sup>61</sup>

Seventeenth-century proverbs such as ‘noble housekeepers need no doors’, and ‘good housekeeping is a thing in all gentlemen required’, emphasised that the display of hospitality was crucial in obtaining gentlemanly status and gaining acceptance into elite circles.<sup>62</sup>

A gentleman’s display of hospitality symbolised an understanding of his potential contribution towards ‘the effective functioning of the social universe’.<sup>63</sup> The estate was the ‘social universe’ over which the country house

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<sup>59</sup> Ferris, ‘Child, Josiah’.

<sup>60</sup> K. Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A cultural study of landscape and legitimacy* (Ashgate, 2001), p.54.

<sup>61</sup> H. Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624), p.82.

<sup>62</sup> T. Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (Cambridge, 1642); G. Herbert, *Outlandish Proverbs* (London, 1640), No. 91.

<sup>63</sup> Heal, *Hospitality in the Early Modern England*, p.13.

and its owner presided. The display of hospitality was an indicator of effective management, which, in turn, demonstrated an owner's ability to make a wider contribution to the overall health of the nation. Contemporary poet and author of conduct literature, Gervase Markham, expressed this view, stating that the management of an estate was: 'A worke very profitable and necessary for the general good of the kingdom.'<sup>64</sup>

The country house and engagement in the London season were essential status symbols of great landlords.<sup>65</sup> Child's ability to move easily between London and Wanstead, as well as entertaining guests at Wanstead, would have substantially increased his social standing. Evidence of the type of sociability which took place at the estate can be found in a reference to an event in 1682, at which the ambassador of the Sultan of Bantam was 'entertained lavishly'.<sup>66</sup> There was also the occasion of the marriage of Child's daughter, Rebecca, to the eldest son of the Duke of Beaufort in 1682, celebrated in 'great magnificence at Wanstead'.<sup>67</sup>

In the absence of fuller primary sources, measuring Child's display of hospitality and sociability is a difficult task. Contemporary descriptions of Child present him as a powerful but unpopular figure, widely known for a manipulative and cunning nature. Cassandra Willoughby's accounts of life at

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<sup>64</sup> G. Markham, *Countrey Contentment's* (London, 1615).

<sup>65</sup> G.E Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1963), p.9.

<sup>66</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah'.

<sup>67</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah'; Hotson, *Late Stuart moneyed men*, p.138.

Wanstead portray Child as anything but a ‘noble’ head of the household.<sup>68</sup> Thus, whilst Child undertook these duties, like many of his contemporaries, it may have been primarily as a recognised obligation, part and parcel of a high social position, and one Child could not afford entirely to neglect.<sup>69</sup>

Evidence to suggest that Wanstead became a recognised, significant estate under Josiah Child’s ownership can be found in the 1822 Robins sale catalogue. On day nine, lot 284 was recorded as: ‘SIBERECHTS, JAN – A Landscape, View of Wanstead House, and surrounding Country.’<sup>70</sup> Siberechts was an established Flemish artist, brought to England by George Villiers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Buckingham around 1674, and widely known for his Dutch-Italianate style wooded landscapes.<sup>71</sup> Whilst in England, the artist found himself in favour amongst the elite members of society, eager to commission views of their country estates from a birds-eye perspective. Siberechts’s portraits of Wollaton Hall (c.1695) (fig. 36), Longleat (1675-1678), Belsize in Middlesex (1696) (fig. 37) and Bayhall in Kent (1680-85), indicate that this artist’s views matched the requirements of wealthy patrons.

Birds-eye views of estates were popular during the late seventeenth century for their ability to portray the extent of an individual’s ownership over the

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<sup>68</sup> See: Brydges, *History of The Willoughby Family*, pp.117-141 for a detailed account regarding the difficult relationship between Josiah Child and his stepchildren.

<sup>69</sup> K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London, 1982), p.58.

<sup>70</sup> *Wanstead House, Essex. Magnificent Furniture, Collection of Fine Paintings and Sculpture, Massive Silver and Gilt Plate, Splendid Library of Choice Books, The Valuable Cellars of Fine-Flavoured Old Wines, Ales, &c., &c.* (London, 1822), day 9, lot 284. Hereafter *Wanstead House Sale*.

<sup>71</sup> J. Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (London, 1979), p.46.

surrounding landscape, together with a sense of mastery over that estate. It was only from such an elevated perspective that the entire design - the unity of the house, garden and wider estate land, and thus the wealth and power of the owner - could be fully expressed.<sup>72</sup> By commissioning such a view, Child was effectively presenting himself as a member of the landed elite and Wanstead as a major estate. Siberechts died in 1703, so any view he painted of Wanstead would definitely have portrayed the Elizabethan mansion belonging to Josiah, rather than Campbell's mansion, on which work was begun in 1713. Unfortunately the current whereabouts of this view remains unknown, and no photographic reproductions of the painting have been traced.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, it is possible that the attribution given in the 1822 catalogue could be incorrect. Other erroneous and problematic attributions in the catalogue have certainly been identified, such as a set of views given to Charles Catton the Elder (figs 22, 23, 38).<sup>74</sup> As will be later fully explored, this attribution is clearly wrong. There are, however, two important factors that do support the likelihood of the Siberechts attribution. The first is geographical relationships. Siberechts produced a number of country estate views for wealthy clients across the country, but *A View of Weald Hall*, attributed to the artist and

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<sup>72</sup> T. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in eighteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995), p.28.

<sup>73</sup> No further evidence was found at archives such as the Witt Library or the Oliver Millar archive at the Paul Mellon Centre. Other studies on the artist by Hearn, Grindle and Fokker make no reference to a Wanstead view by Siberechts. See: T.H Fokker, *Jans Siberechts* (Paris, 1931).

<sup>74</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 10, lot 136 and 179.

showing a house near to Wanstead, indicates that he was active in Essex at the time of Josiah's ownership.<sup>75</sup> It is possible that Child knew the painting of Weald Hall, and decided to commission a similar view in order to demonstrate that the Wanstead estate was of equal significance.

A second link - and a possible means by which Child came to commission Siberechts - relates to Child's marriage to his third wife Emma, the widow of Francis Willoughby. Although Emma remained at Wanstead after her marriage to Child, her children returned to their former residence at Wollaton after 1680. In 1693, Emma's youngest child, Thomas Willoughby, commissioned Siberechts to paint a view of the Wollaton estate (fig. 36).<sup>76</sup> It is therefore reasonable to propose that the painted view of Wanstead may have come about as a result of this familial tie.

Most importantly, the connections between Wanstead and the other views by Siberechts demonstrate that this type of portrait was widely popular amongst the elite, who understood how these paintings could effectively communicate their social position, wealth and influence over their surroundings. For 'new men', position in society was not entirely judged by baronetcies or knighthoods, roles as Members of Parliament, or participants in City government, but also by reputed financial position.<sup>77</sup> Siberechts views effectively portrayed such wealth, and its worthy dispersal.

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<sup>75</sup> 'A Painting of Weald Hall, Essex', *Country Life Magazine* (15 August 1947), p.326.

<sup>76</sup> Harris, *Artist and the Country House*, p.46.

<sup>77</sup> N. Grindle, 'Big Houses and Little People: How Formal Patterns in the Landscape relate to social composition in Jans Siberechts later works', *Object*, No. 2 (1999-2000), p.100.

Having established the significance of Child's acquisition, it is now time to turn attention from the Elizabethan manor to the surrounding Wanstead landscape. Much of the discussion so far has concerned the household and the symbolic qualities of the country house. However the landscape at Wanstead was a noticeably new feature of the estate and, contrary to what may be expected, no architectural improvements were carried out during this period. Instead, Child spent significant sums of money on improving the grounds. Why Child prioritised the landscape and what improvements he made will be the focus of the next part of this chapter.

### **Landscapes versus Architecture**

Although primary evidence is lacking, it is possible to speculate about the main contributing factors towards Child's decision to carry out landscape, rather than architectural improvements. The first is cost. Even though Child invested large sums of money in landscape improvements, this was probably less costly than constructing a new country house. During the late seventeenth century, it was not unusual for building projects to be put on hold following the acquisition of an estate. This is because the costs of rebuilding were often unacceptably high for the newly moneyed owner.<sup>78</sup>

Secondly, the improvement of the Wanstead landscape may have been an attempt to prepare the property for Child's future descendants, who, presumably, would have the necessary funds to commence rebuilding. The

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<sup>78</sup> K. Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London, 2000), p.303.



acquisition of an estate demonstrated an individual's optimism in a lengthy future for his family on the estate. If Child believed in the longevity of country house ownership then it is likely that he expected rebuilding to take place in the future. Indeed, Child's landscape improvements may also have followed the principle stated in *Le Jardin de Plasir*, published by the French gardener, André Mollet, in 1650, and translated into English in 1670; 'one ought to begin to plant even before the building of the House so that the Trees may become to half growth when the House shall be built'.<sup>79</sup>

A comparison between Kip and Knyff's series of engraved views of Wanstead and those produced by John Rocque in 1735 indicates that Campbell's mansion, begun circa 1713, stood directly upon the site of the Elizabethan manor (figs 28-29 and 27). This is likely to have been because Child's plantations of avenues leading up to the old building dictated where the new house should be built. Child's extensive plantations can be interpreted as his way of leaving his mark on Wanstead. By effectively preparing the grounds for his descendants, Child was ensuring that any new house was built in what was considered the ideal situation by the estate's original founder.

Finally, Josiah Child's improvement of the landscape can also be considered as a means of complementing the pre-existing Elizabethan mansion. Little is known of the condition of the Wanstead gardens at the time of Child's acquisition, but the instability of ownerships following Leicester's death would suggest that the grounds at Wanstead had become somewhat neglected

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<sup>79</sup> A. Mollet, *The Garden of Pleasure* (London 1670), p.2.

and so were presumably in urgent need of improvement. Above all, a wealth of prescriptive literature dating from the seventeenth century opined that a well designed garden was an essential accompaniment to any great house: ‘We may without vanity conclude, that a Garden of pleasant Avenues, Walks, Fruits, Flowers, Grots and other Branches springing from it, well composed, is the only compleat and permanent inanimate objet of delight the world affords.’<sup>80</sup>

### **Josiah Child’s Improvements of the Wanstead Landscape**

The landscape improvements carried out by Child provide an insight into the features deemed fashionable in the late seventeenth century. Surviving contemporary descriptions of Wanstead primarily comment on the landscape rather than the Elizabethan mansion, indicating that the new gardens were the feature of the Wanstead estate deemed most worthy of commentary. The only surviving visual evidence of Child’s landscape improvements are the three engraved views of Wanstead by Kip and Knyff (figs 28-30). It is important to keep in mind, however, that this series of engravings was produced after Josiah’s death, when the estate belonged to his son, Richard. Some of the features depicted by Kip and Knyff, therefore, represent the work carried out by George London and Henry Wise, employed in 1706 to improve the grounds. As a result, the engravings are complex sources, which conflate two different periods of ownership. It is therefore necessary to refer to contemporary descriptions from the late seventeenth century in order most accurately to establish which landscape features seen in the Kip and Knyff’s

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<sup>80</sup> J. Worlidge, *Systema Horti-culturae, or, The Art of Gardening* (London, 1688), p.5.

engravings were those introduced during this period, and which were created later. The features most commonly noted in contemporary accounts dating from this period include the avenues and fishponds, and they will therefore form the basis of this discussion.

### Avenues

Evidence of the complex web of avenues appear in the engraved views by Kip and Knyff; in particular, the main avenue that extended south of the house towards the River Roding, can still be found in the landscape today (fig. 8). Whilst the avenues were undoubtedly a feature that took time to flourish, they are amongst the earliest examples of how Wanstead's owners attempted to improve and express their dominance over the estate's landscape. The planting of avenues, using walnut, chestnut, elm and white poplar trees, marks a significant turning point in the history of the Wanstead landscape, when the grounds were transformed from the 'cursed barren spot' described by Evelyn, into a site of 'delicious new plantations'.<sup>81</sup>

Evidence of the planting of avenues in the late seventeenth century can be noted in Evelyn's 1683 account of his visit to Wanstead, in which he recorded: 'I went to see Sir Josiah Childs prodigious Cost in planting of Walnut trees, about his seate.'<sup>82</sup> Evelyn's use of the active verb 'planting' indicate that these were recent features at the time of his visit. In 1691, James Gibson recorded his visit to Wanstead in his account of several gardens near

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<sup>81</sup> J. Harris, *Leighton-Stone Air: A Poem, or a Poetical Encomium on the Excellency of its SOIL, Healthy AIR and Beauteous Situation* (London, 1702), p.34.

<sup>82</sup> Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, p.305.

London, describing Child's plantations of walnuts, elms and ashes as 'more worth seeing than his gardens, which are but indifferent'.<sup>83</sup> Further description of the avenues at Wanstead can be found in the poem *Leighton-Stone-Air* (1702) by Joseph Harris, in which he refers to the 'New Plantations Sir Josiah Child has honoured it with'.<sup>84</sup> According to the author, these included 'Chestnut-Avenues' and 'vaulted Grotts', described in a footnote as 'Grotts: Chestnuts and Abel-trees [*Populus alba*, white poplar] most delightfully planted round 2 vast Fish-ponds on the Forrest, projecting their beauty in the Water'.<sup>85</sup> These sources confirm that the plantations of trees described were amongst the landscape improvements undertaken by Josiah.

Although John Evelyn's *Sylva: or a discourse of Forest Trees* (1664) is widely credited for introducing the term 'avenue' into the English language, this was by no means an entirely new feature of the seventeenth-century English country house landscape.<sup>86</sup> Sarah Couch notes that tree-lined drives, much like avenues, were associated with ceremonial routes, and were a feature of Tudor palaces such as Nonsuch and Twickenham Park.<sup>87</sup> Avenues

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<sup>83</sup> J. Gibson, 'A Short account of several gardens near London, with remarks on some particular is wherein they excel, or are deficient, upon a view of them in December 1691', *Archaeologia*, 15 vols (London, 1796), XII. It is likely that by the term 'gardens', Gibson is referring to the gardens within immediate proximity to the house, such as the small geometric gardens and kitchen gardens depicted in Kip and Knyff's engraving,

<sup>84</sup> Harris, *Leighton Stone-Air*, p.34.

<sup>85</sup> Harris, *Leighton Stone-Air*, p.34.

<sup>86</sup> "avenue, n.", Oxford English Dictionary Online, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/13673?rskey=wy5eit&result=1&isAdvanced=false>, accessed February 05, 2016. Hereafter *OED*.

<sup>87</sup> S. Couch, 'The practice of Avenue Planting in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Garden History*, Vol. 20, No.2 (Autumn 1992), p.174.

had also been introduced into landscapes elsewhere in Europe prior to their popularity in England, and many early seventeenth-century examples were influenced by the Italian Renaissance gardens associated with Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), whose work was to influence Campbell's architectural designs for the rebuilding of Wanstead House. In his designs for villas, Palladio paid close attention to tying the building with its surroundings, usually by creating a strong central axis running through the landscape. Examples of such techniques can be seen at the Medici Villa at Pratolino, depicted by Giusto Utens in 1599 (fig. 39), and the Villa Emo at Fanzolo, built between 1555 and 1565, where the avenue appears to run straight through the landscape into the house (fig. 40).<sup>88</sup>

In France, many baroque gardens adopted similar features, most notably Le Notre's designs for the gardens at the Château de Versailles for King Louis XIV (fig. 41). Mollet's *Jardin de Plaisir* advocated the use of extensive axial avenues, describing them as 'most necessary to adorning houses'.<sup>89</sup> Rene Rapin also praised the use of avenues, 'for nothing without them is pleasant made; They beauty to the ruder Countrey adde.'<sup>90</sup> Upon his restoration, Charles II employed Mollet to execute designs for St James's Park much like those he had witnessed whilst exiled in France. This included an extensive and complex web of avenues. As demonstrated in the Kip and Knyff views of country house landscapes such as Boughton and Wentworth, such designs had

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<sup>88</sup> P. Marton, M. Wundram, T. Pape eds, *Palladio: The Complete Buildings* (Koln, 2008), p.165.

<sup>89</sup> Mollet, *Garden of Pleasure*, p.2.

<sup>90</sup> R. Rapin, *Of Gardens* (London, 1672), preface, p.3.

considerable impact on seventeenth-century English gardens, including those created by Josiah at Wanstead (figs 42 and 43).

The popularity of avenues no doubt derived from their ability to emphasise the house as a pivotal point in the landscape and effectively to illustrate the exceptional wealth of the owner. In addition to their role as symbolic of influence and power, the avenue served a number of other functions. Evelyn's early definition of the avenue as 'the principal walk to the front of the house or Seat' was indeed a key feature, but avenues were not only used as approaches.<sup>91</sup>

As Kip and Knyff's view illustrates, the avenues at Wanstead extended well beyond the approach into the further reaches of the landscape. By doing so, they provided impressive views of the house from various points within the estate grounds. This was an effective means of emphasising the building as central to the estate. Avenues also provided long vistas of the landscape from the house. Mollet's *Garden of Pleasure* describes the prospect of the landscape provided by avenues; 'when the doors of the house are open'd, one may see from one end to the other, as far of our sight will extend'.<sup>92</sup> Avenues could frame and lead the eye towards particular landscape monuments designed to serve as 'eye catchers'.<sup>93</sup> The central avenue in Kip and Knyff's view looking east, for example, illustrates how an avenue led the visitor's eye

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<sup>91</sup> "avenue, n."

<sup>92</sup> Mollet, *Garden of Pleasure*, p.1.

<sup>93</sup> C. Dalton, 'He that...doth not master the human figure': Sir John Vanbrugh and the Vitruvian Landscape', *Garden History*, Vol.37, No. 1 (Summer 2009), pp.3-37.

towards the newly introduced canal (fig. 28). In one of the anonymous views of the estate attributed to Catton, the avenue on the right leads directly towards the fortification island, whilst that on the left runs to the amphitheatre (fig. 23). Whilst it is important to acknowledge that these ‘eye catchers’ were later additions to the landscape, Josiah’s introduction of avenues made it possible for such developments to occur, further suggesting his projections for a lengthy future for his descendants at Wanstead.

By the time Josiah was carrying out his plantation schemes in the late seventeenth century, the planting of avenues had taken on a further, additional meaning. Throughout the Civil War, much timber had been felled on the estates of the Royalists in order to supply the army with necessary funds and material. During the late seventeenth century there was resurgence in the planting of trees. Evelyn and other contemporary writers saw the practice as a patriotic one, suggestive of the estate’s ability to provide the Royal Navy with much needed timber, if only as an insurance for the future.<sup>94</sup> The planting of trees was, therefore, also symbolic of patriotism.

The primary motive behind the publication of Evelyn’s influential *Sylva*, for example, was to emphasise the usefulness of trees for timber and fuel. The chestnut, a tree commonly referred to in contemporary accounts of the Wanstead plantations, such as that by Joseph Harris in 1702, is described as ‘one of the most sought after by Carpenter and Joyner’.<sup>95</sup> Evelyn also pays

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<sup>94</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.28.

<sup>95</sup> Evelyn, *Sylva*, p.25; Harris, *Leighton Stone-Air*, p.34.

close attention to the types of trees that were considered as adding ornament to a country house dwelling. Chestnut trees are thus also described as a ‘magnificent and royal ornament’ for avenues. Child’s choice of walnut trees, meanwhile, corresponds with another recommendation made in *Sylva*, which recommends these as providing ‘most graceful avenues to our country dwellings’.<sup>96</sup> Finally, Evelyn describes Abele [white poplar] trees as ‘suitable for walks and Avenues about Grounds which are situated low, and near the water’.<sup>97</sup> Harris’s description also includes Abel-trees at Wanstead, where they surrounded the two vast fishponds, ‘projecting their beauty in the Water’.<sup>98</sup>

The June and September 1822 sale catalogues provide no indication that the principal publications that advocated the use of avenues, such as Mollet’s *Garden of Pleasure*, Evelyn’s *Sylva*, or Moses Cook’s *Manner of Raising, Ordering and Improving Forest Trees*, were held in the Wanstead library collection.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, Josiah’s introduction of avenues and the use of trees specifically recommended in such contemporary literature on the topic, suggest that he was compliant with contemporary tastes and ideals in landscape design, and aware of the importance and symbolic connotations of these features on an estate. The planting of avenues therefore effectively enhanced Wanstead’s status, helping it to equate with other major estates in the country.

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<sup>96</sup> Evelyn, *Sylva*, p.43.

<sup>97</sup> Evelyn, *Sylva*, p.82.

<sup>98</sup> Harris, *Leighton Stone-Air*, p.34.

<sup>99</sup> See: D. F Keeling, *Wanstead House: The Owners and their Books* (Wanstead, 1994), p.21.



### Fishponds

Kip and Knyff's engraved view to the west shows four small ponds south of the house, one above the other, and most noticeably, two large semi-circular ponds, situated north of the building (fig. 29). Although a popular garden feature since the Roman period, and frequently referred to in descriptions of English medieval gardens, there is no evidence in Dudley's accounts of fishponds in use at Wanstead.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, Evelyn's description of Josiah's 'making fish-ponds' suggest that these were new additions to the landscape.<sup>101</sup> Seventeenth-century fishponds conformed to the popular geometric designs of the surrounding gardens and were therefore often square, rectangular, circular or elliptical, much like those featured in Kip and Knyff's views. The mentioning of fish ponds in contemporary accounts indicate that they were considered important features in the landscape during this period, and so require detailed consideration.

The fishponds at Wanstead would have been intended to serve several important roles, integral to the reputation of Josiah and the estate. In medieval gardens, fishponds primarily served a utilitarian function, providing the estate with a source of food. They usually came in two sizes. The larger, commonly known as the 'vivarium', was used as a breeding pond for fish, and this is likely to have been the function of the two semi-circular ponds seen in front of Wanstead house in Kip and Knyff's view to the west. The other type of fishpond was the 'servatorium'. These were smaller, holding ponds,

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<sup>100</sup> C. K. Currie, 'Fishponds as Garden Features, c.1550-1750', *Garden History*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p.22.

<sup>101</sup> Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, p.306.

positioned near the house, similar to the four depicted by Kip and Knyff (fig. 44). These ponds enabled fish, when ready for consumption, to be collected for the household easily and efficiently, complying with Roger North's recommendations that 'it is good to place them in some inclos'd Grounds near the chief Mansion House'.<sup>102</sup> A list dating from 1710, which names the various fish kept in the ponds at Dyrham Park and when they would be ready for consumption, indicates that the practice of using fishponds to supply the household continued into the early eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> And, in 1691, Gibson estimated that the fish stock at Wanstead was worth £5000, suggesting that the ponds at this property were capable of providing copious amounts of fish.<sup>104</sup>

North's *A Discourse of Fish and Fish-Ponds* (1714), however, also draws attention to the fishpond's more symbolic qualities, claiming that the supply of fish could help bind local society together: 'You may oblige your Friends and neighbours, by making presents of them, which from the countryman to the King is well taken.'<sup>105</sup> Much like kitchen gardens, the inclusion of fishponds in the garden could thus be an effective means of demonstrating an owner's active involvement in the husbandry of his estate.

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<sup>102</sup> R. North, *A Discourse of Fish and Fishponds* (London 1714), p.73. Other contemporary publications which instructed on the construction and use of fishponds in estate landscapes include: Markham, *Countrey Contentment's*; Worlidge, *Systema Horti-culturae*; J. Balgrave, *The Epitome of the Art of Husbandry* (London, 1669); J. Mortimer, *The Whole Art of Husbandry* (London, 1721).

<sup>103</sup> Currie, 'Fishponds as Garden Features', p.25.

<sup>104</sup> Gibson, 'Short account of several gardens near London', pp.186-187.

<sup>105</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.34.

In addition to serving a utilitarian and symbolic function, stock could also facilitate the all important estate duty of entertaining family and guests, through the leisured pastime of fishing. Again, this is evident from North's comments; 'there is advantage enough in the mastery of fish, from the diversion, not to speak of the employment that it brings to a family'.<sup>106</sup> In *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (1712), a copy of which was held within the Wanstead library, John James likewise referred to the pleasure that could be derived from fishponds, describing fishing as 'none of the least Pleasures of the Country'.<sup>107</sup>

The influence of the Italian Renaissance gardens in England during the late seventeenth century encouraged attention to turn gradually towards the more ornamental, rather than utilitarian qualities of water. Mollet's *Jardin de Plaisir* famously described water as 'the soul of the garden', and the larger fishponds at Wanstead were presumably intended to serve as both a utilitarian and an ornamental feature of the grounds.<sup>108</sup> This is evident by their central location in the approach to the house. According to C.K. Currie, the ornamental function of ponds came still more to the fore during the eighteenth century, as the production and supply of fish became secondary.<sup>109</sup> Later views of the grounds at Wanstead, such as the anonymous view *Gentlemen going out hunting*, and John Rocque's 1735 map (fig. 22 and 27), show that the two semi-circular ponds were reconfigured into one larger, more visually

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<sup>106</sup> North, *Discourse of Fish*, p.73.

<sup>107</sup> J. James, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (London 1712), p.204.

<sup>108</sup> Mollet, *Garden of Pleasure*, p.1.

<sup>109</sup> Currie, *Fishponds as Garden Features*, p.41.

impressive expanse of water after Wanstead House was rebuilt. These views also show that the smaller fishponds situated at the rear of the house had been removed, suggesting that the display of husbandry, within such close proximity to the house, was no longer so desirable or necessary.

The more utilitarian functions of the estate were increasingly hidden from view, especially in the most public spaces of the landscape. The fishponds situated at the front of the house are likely to have no longer served their original function, and thus became ornamental. The absence of the smaller fishponds in the plan of the gardens drawn by the French traveller, Pierre Jacques Fourgeroux, in 1728, and Rocque's map of 1735, indicates that, like the kitchen gardens, they were eradicated from the landscape following the completion of the new house by Campbell (fig. 45 and 27). In addition, visitor accounts dating from later in the eighteenth century make no reference to the fishponds. They are therefore, crucially, a key feature of *Josiah's* landscape at Wanstead, indicating his engagement with concerns which were central to seventeenth-century landscape design and estate husbandry.

### **Conclusion - and Josiah's monument**

This chapter began by discussing the early history of the estate in order to provide a context for and to demonstrate the site's significance at the time of Josiah Child's acquisition in 1673. Compared to the acquisitions of his mercantile peers, establishing themselves in smaller properties in the London suburbs of Hackney and Highgate, Child's purchase was distinctive. It appears to have been fuelled by a desire to consolidate wealth in a landed

estate, and to enhance social standing and political influence. Although Child is indeed unusual in both the scale of his acquisition and improvement of the landscape, he provides a strong example of the benefits that trade expansion and social mobility could bring.

Child died on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1699, and was buried at the parish church, St Mary the Virgin, near Wanstead House, visible in Kip and Kniff's view taken from the north in two sections (fig. 30). Three years earlier, the estate had been valued at £20,000.<sup>110</sup> Landowners' wills during the late seventeenth century were increasingly arranged by male entail life settlement. This meant that the estate was intended to be passed from the eldest son to his eldest son, and, in the absence of a male issue, to the landowner's brother or, if necessary, to a more distant male relative such as an uncle or cousin. Female inheritance was generally avoided, if possible. The principal intention behind the male entail method was to secure family assets within the patrilineal bloodline.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, arranging the estate to be inherited by a life settlement meant that an heir was unable to sell, establishing him as a trustee, rather than an owner, making him responsible for maintaining the estate for future heirs.<sup>112</sup>

Josiah was outlived by two of his three daughters from his first and second marriage, and two sons. His eldest son was also named Josiah, and was born of his second marriage to Mary Attwood, whilst the other two, Barnard and

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<sup>110</sup> Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah.'; NA PROB 11/451/289.

<sup>111</sup> For discussions regarding inheritance and landownership see: G. E Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1963); Stone and Stone, *Open Elite*; J. Habakkuk, *Marriage Debt and the Estates System* (London, 1994).

<sup>112</sup> Williamson and Bellamy, *Property and Landscape*, p.112.

Richard, resulted from his third marriage to Emma Barnard. Whilst the primogeniture method was originally intended in Josiah's plans for the inheritance of his assets, a rift within the family meant that his will was not straightforward.

Most significantly, Josiah's eldest son, Josiah, was gradually excluded. In 1690, Josiah the younger had married Elizabeth, the daughter of fellow East India magnate, Sir Thomas Cooke. One of the important aspects of the marriage settlement was for a £20,000 dowry to be paid by the Cooke family.<sup>113</sup> However, there seems to have been difficulties in settling the dowry, presumably on account of the financial problems which Thomas Cooke was facing, which had come to public attention in 1695.<sup>114</sup> The scandal surrounding Cooke's affairs indicates why Josiah Child would have been less than comfortable leaving all his assets to his eldest son. Given that the principal aim of the male entail formula was to ensure the estate's security, Josiah removed Wanstead and his other assets from Josiah the younger, in an attempt to force him and Cooke to finalise the actions required by the marriage settlement.

As a result, Josiah's younger sons, Barnard and Richard, were instead identified as the executors of the will, with an equal share of their father's estates, shipping, and remaining shares in the East India Company. Since they

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<sup>113</sup> NA PROB 11/451/289. Special thanks to Tim Couzens for a discussion about Josiah's will and the dispute with the Cooke family.

<sup>114</sup> R. D. Sheldon, 'Cooke, Sir Thomas (c.1648–1709)', *ODNB*, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38755](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38755), accessed 20 January 2016.

were under age, this had the effect of making their mother, Emma Barnard, Josiah's third wife, sole Executrix, as their legal Guardian. Two codicils dating from 1697 and 1698 indicate little change regarding Josiah the younger's inheritance, and the Cookes £20,000 dowry does not seem to have been settled, suggesting that family relations had not improved. By 1698, Barnard had died from a bout of smallpox, making Richard the sole executor. In January 1704, Josiah the younger died of pleurisy, without issue.<sup>115</sup> By then, Richard Child had come of age and was the only surviving male heir, succeeding as 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet and owner of the family estates. Given that he commissioned landscape improvements in 1706, he is likely to have moved into Wanstead around this time.

Reference throughout Child's will to Wanstead as a 'mansion', whilst his other properties are described as 'manors', indicates that this was amongst his most prized possessions. His contribution as founder of the estate was recognised throughout the eighteenth century in various visitor accounts and newspaper publications. As late as 1789, the *New London Magazine* commemorated his role, stating: 'This noble seat was prepared by Sir Josiah Child, who added to the advantage of a fine situation a vast number of rows of trees, planted in avenues and vistas leading up to the spot of the ground where the old house stood.'<sup>116</sup> It is, however, the monument to Josiah Child, which

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<sup>115</sup> P. Watson, 'CHILD, Sir Josiah, 2nd Bt. (c.1668-1704), of Wanstead, Essex', *HOP*, [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/child-sir-josiah-1668-1704](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/child-sir-josiah-1668-1704), accessed 20 January 2016.

<sup>116</sup> 'A Description of Wanstead House in Essex, the seat of the late Earl of Tilney', *New London Magazine* (April 1789), p.210.

perhaps best commemorates his legacy as having established the Wanstead estate (fig. 46).

The monument is situated in the parish church and it depicts Josiah Child standing between two Corinthian columns.<sup>117</sup> Typical of such monuments, he is clothed in ancient Roman dress and a cuirass, but also wearing a periwig, commonly worn during the late seventeenth century. The use of Roman costume to evoke a sense of civic virtue is also evident in comparable monuments, such as Grinling Gibbons's monument to Viscount Campden and his family (1688) in Exton, Rutland (fig. 47), and Michael Rysbrack's monument to Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Foley and his Family (c.1735-38) at Great Witley, Worcestershire (fig. 48). Like Josiah's monument, these were also situated in each family's estate parish.<sup>118</sup> Child's coat of arms is displayed above his head and, at his feet, we see the reclining figure of his deceased son, Barnard. Flanking the figures on either side are putti, one holding a human skull, a *memento mori*, the other blowing a trumpet. On either side of the columns, two weeping women mourn the loss of both Josiah and Barnard.

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<sup>117</sup> Evidence of the old parish church can be noted on site in the grounds of the parish cemetery, by the remaining slabs of stone, which once formed the old church interior.

<sup>118</sup> For a detailed discussion of these works see M. Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London, 2000), pp.109-110. For further information about commemorative sculpture, sculpture in the country house and the production of busts during the eighteenth century see: M. Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London, 2000); M. Baker, *The Marble Index: Roubiliac and Sculptural Portraiture in Eighteenth-century Britain* (London and New Haven, 2014); M. Craske, *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body: A History of Monumental Sculpture and Commemorative Art in England, 1720-1770* (London and New Haven, 2007); K. Eustace, *Michael Rysbrack: Sculptor 1694 – 1770* (Bristol, 1982).



Matthew Craske has noted that it was not uncommon for money to be put aside in a will to contribute towards such a commission. However, no evidence for this exists in Josiah's will. It seems likely, therefore, to have been commissioned by a family member. Given the complex relations among the Childs, it seems unlikely that this would have been something commissioned by Josiah the younger, and Barnard's untimely death suggests that it was his brother Richard, the eventual heir to the estate, who commissioned the statue.<sup>119</sup>

That statue has been attributed to John Nost, although there is little substantial evidence to confirm this attribution.<sup>120</sup> If it is correct, and if the statue was also indeed commissioned by Richard, the fact that Nost died in 1710 means that the commission must have occurred between 1704 and 1710. By then,

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<sup>119</sup> Newham Archive, Hiram Stead Newspaper Cuttings Collection, p.11. Hereafter Stead. Stead's collection of newspaper clippings includes a reference to the monument made in 1754 which states that the monument was commissioned by Child, however the article provides no further supporting evidence regarding the commission.

<sup>120</sup> According to local historian Winifred Eastment, the first attribution to Nost comes from Hamilton Kerr's article, 'East of Aldgate', for *Country Life Magazine* (22 October 1943), pp.728-731. However, no reference to how this attribution was been made is included in the article. Other sources which refer to Nost include: *Seven Centuries of Wanstead Church* (London, 1947); W. Eastment, *Wanstead Through the Ages* (Wanstead, 1969), p.24; Craske, *Silent Rhetoric of the Body*, p.363; N. Pevsner ed., *The Buildings of England: Essex* (London, 1969), p.377. Biographer Richard Grassby describes this edifice as 'probably by Nost', see: Grassby 'Child, Sir Josiah.' For more information about John Nost see: M. G. Sullivan, 'Nost, John (d. 1710)' ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69041](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69041), accessed 29 September 2015. Sullivan makes no comment regarding the monument of Josiah Child at Wanstead. Records held in the Witt Library at the Courtauld Institute in London provide records only for John Nost the Younger. Files for John Nost the Elder have been amended to 'Gerard Nost' (d.1729). Images in this artist file include garden sculptures for properties Drayton House and Canons, Ashby. It is therefore unclear whether John Nost is an accurate attribution.

Nost had attracted royal patronage and become widely respected for his statuary in the gardens of Chatsworth, Castle Howard and Rousham. This would have made him an attractive choice of sculptor to produce a monument in honour of Wanstead's great founder.<sup>121</sup>

As a commemorative monument, its location within the church was, of course, fitting. Its position was also significant because it was accessible to a public as well as a private audience, manifesting continuity of name, title, and of ownership of the Wanstead estate on which the church stood.<sup>122</sup> Whilst access to Wanstead House was selective, few would have been turned away from the parish church. Seated under the patriarchal gaze of Josiah's effigy, visitors would no doubt have been reminded of his powerful influence.

The production of such elaborate effigies was, however, somewhat unpopular and could be considered in poor taste. In the early seventeenth century, John Weever's *Ancient Funeral Monuments* advised against merchants' taste for gaudy pomp when erecting tombs.<sup>123</sup> These sentiments continued throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, particularly after the South Sea Bubble, the first international financial crash, in 1720-21, which left many investors in debt and encouraged merchants to become increasingly cautious about large expenditure.<sup>124</sup> Comparisons can instead be made to the

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<sup>121</sup> Sullivan, 'Nost, John.'

<sup>122</sup> Baker, *Figured in Marble*, pp.109-110.

<sup>123</sup> J. Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (London, 1631), pp.10-11.

<sup>124</sup> Craske, *Silent Rhetoric*, p.347. For literature on the South Sea Bubble see: H.J Paul, *The South Sea Bubble: An economic history of its origins and consequences* (London and New York, 2011); R. Dale, *The First Crash: Lessons from the South Sea Bubble* (Princeton and

monuments of wealthy landowners such as that to Viscount Campden by Gibbons (fig. 47), or John Nost's monument to John Digby, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bristol at Sherborne Abbey, produced in 1698 (fig. 49), thus equating Child to the landed elite. The elevated position of the Child monument echoes that of the aerial views of his estate, similarly indicating power and control.<sup>125</sup> Child was eager to adopt the lifestyle of the landed elite, whilst maintaining his links with his mercantile fortune. The monument in St Mary's church at Wanstead commemorates his success in doing so.

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Oxford, 2004); M. Balen, *A Very English Deceit: The Secret History of the South Sea Bubble and the First Great Financial Scandal* (London, 2002); J. Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (Dover, 1993).

<sup>125</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot 284.

## Chapter Two: 1704-1720

### Richard Child, Viscount Castlemaine and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney: I

#### Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis presented Josiah Child as an ambitious, newly moneyed gentleman who exemplified the success of the upwardly rising mercantile classes of the late seventeenth century. His ability to acquire estates equal to those held by members of the aristocracy made him exceptional among his peers. His ownership of these estates, combined with his role as Director of the East India Company and his estimated wealth of £280,000, meant that Richard Child received a substantial inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the ownership of shares, connections between the Child family and the East India Company weakened after Josiah's death, and Richard appears to have had little involvement in the company. He did, however, invest in the South Sea Company, founded in 1711 as a private-public partnership; in the shipment of slaves to South America. Unlike many of his peers, who suffered tremendously from the company's financial crash in 1720, Richard Child appears to have been able to weather the crisis, presumably on account of careful management and sufficient funds.<sup>2</sup> In 1722 Daniel Defoe commented on the singularity of Child having maintained his fortune:

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<sup>1</sup> R. Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah, first baronet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/52900](http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/52900), accessed 8 March 2013. Hereafter *ODNB*; National Archives PROB 11/451/289, 'Will of Sir Josiah Child of Wanstead, Essex, February 1696, p.7. Hereafter NA.

<sup>2</sup> G.E Tasker, 'Wanstead: Its Manor & Palace', *Essex Review*, Vol.7 (1898), p.223.

South Sea was a general possession, and if my Lord Castlemain was wounded by that arrow shot in the dark it was a misfortune. But it is so much a happiness that it was not a mortal wound, as it was to some men who once seemed as much out of the reach of it. And that blow, be it what it will, is not remembered for joy of the escape, for we see this noble family, by prudence and management, rise out of all that cloud, if it may be allowed such a name, and shining in the same full lustre as before. This cannot be said of some other families in this county, whose fine parks and new-built palaces are fallen under forfeitures and alienations by the misfortunes of the times and by the ruin of their masters' fortunes in that South Sea deluge.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to his inherited wealth, Richard's ownership of the family estates provided him with a platform for considerable political influence. According to John Habakkuk, an estate conferred power of patronage, partly because it gave access to positions of authority in the country and at Westminster, but also because land itself gave influence.<sup>4</sup> Owners of estates could rally support through the tenants and workers who resided on their land and, therefore, the more land a gentleman owned, the more political power he could obtain. Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley describe how estates formed the basis of an owner's standing in county administration and enabled the landowner to establish his authority over those dependent on the estate.<sup>5</sup> In short, the country house was 'the administrative

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<sup>3</sup> D. Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. P.N Furbank and W.R. Owens (London, 1991), p.41.

<sup>4</sup> J. Habakkuk, *Marriage Debt and the Estates System* (London, 1994), p.404.

<sup>5</sup> A. Mackley and R. Wilson, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (London, 2000), p.50. See also: T. Williamson and L. Bellamy, 'The Rise of the Great Estates' in *Property and Landscape: A Social History of Land Ownership and the English Countryside* (London, 1987), pp.116-121.

nerve centre of the estate'.<sup>6</sup> Richard Child served as MP for Maldon between 1708 and 1710, Essex between 1710 and 1722, and the latter again between 1727 and 1734.<sup>7</sup> The ownership of Wanstead no doubt helped to secure and sustain these positions.

At the time of his inheritance, Child was a member of the Tory parliament but, following Queen Anne's death in 1714 and the Hanoverian succession, he soon converted to Whig, securing himself a place in the more powerful political party of the period. In return for his conversion, Child was made Baron of Newton of County Donegal and Viscount Castlemaine of County Kerry in April 1718.<sup>8</sup> This transition was not necessarily on account of his personal political views, but more probably represented a move towards the stronger political party for the purposes of social advancement.<sup>9</sup> However, the absence of substantial evidence regarding his political views means the matter has to remain one for speculation.

Richard Child's inheritance of the Wanstead estate, worth £20,000, was no doubt well received as an additional source of wealth for him and his new wife, Dorothy, whom he had married in 1703.<sup>10</sup> The acquisition of Wanstead would have enhanced the fortune of what was already a financially advantageous match. Dorothy came from a well-established family. She was the daughter and heiress

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<sup>6</sup> Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, p.50.

<sup>7</sup> E. Cruickshanks, 'CHILD, Sir Richard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bt. (1680-1750), of Wanstead, Essex', History of Parliament Online, hereafter HOP, [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/child-sir-richard-1680-1750](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/child-sir-richard-1680-1750), accessed 10 April 2014.

<sup>8</sup> V. Gibbs ed., *The Complete Peerage* (London, 1913), p.92.

<sup>9</sup> Cruickshanks, 'CHILD, Sir Richard.'; R. Dormant, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia, 1986), p.158.

<sup>10</sup> NA PROB 11/451/289, p.2; Cruickshanks, 'CHILD, Sir Richard.'

of John Glynne of Henley Park, Surrey.<sup>11</sup> Her mother was the daughter of Francis Tylney of Rotherwick. In addition to the financial benefits of the union, Richard was eventually able to make claim to Dorothy's family name in consequence of her inheritance of the Tylney estates. In 1731, he was therefore made 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney and he assumed the name by an Act of Parliament in 1733.<sup>12</sup> Child's marriage to Dorothy Glynne was thus another means by which the family's financial stability and social status was improved and secured.

Having provided some background on Richard Child's inheritance of Wanstead and his marriage to Dorothy Glynne, this chapter will focus on the improvements made to the estate between 1704 and 1720. These predominantly consist of the continuation of Josiah Child's landscape designs and the rebuilding of Wanstead House. Wilson and Mackley's argument that it was common amongst newly moneyed gentlemen for the real breakthrough in the establishment of a landed dynasty to be made by the second generation is certainly supported by the history

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<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Glynne's grandfather, also John Glynne, was a high profile judge at Lincolns Inn. In January 1665, he was made Lord Chief Justice of the upper bench and in 1660, he was chosen as Knight of the shire for Caernarvonshire. In 1660, King Charles II made Glynne the eldest sergeant at law and received a knighthood. Glynne seems to have supported the Parliamentarians during the Civil War and held local office under the Commonwealth and Protectorates. Dorothy's grandfather was originally from Norfolk and bought the manor of Rotherwick in 1629. See: K. Lindley, 'Glynne, Sir John (1603-1666)', *ODNB*, [www.oxfordnb.com/ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/10843](http://www.oxfordnb.com/ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/10843), accessed 13 June 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Gibbs, *Complete Peerage*, p.92; Cruickshanks, 'CHILD, Sir Richard'. Thanks to Richard Arno for a discussion that clarified that 'Tylney' was not a title until made for Richard Child in 1731. Prior to this, it had been a family name. Because Richard Child was best known as 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, I will refer to Richard as Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, rather than Viscount Castlemaine throughout this thesis.

of the Childs and Wanstead.<sup>13</sup> The first improvements to be addressed will be the landscape work carried out by George London and Henry Wise between 1706 and 1715. This discussion of the landscape will then be followed by consideration of the construction of the new house.

### **The Early Wanstead Landscape, 1706-1715**

There are two key sources of primary evidence for the early landscape at Wanstead. These are the series of engravings of Wanstead by Johann Kip and Leonard Knyff, dating from between 1707 and 1713 (figs 28-30), and the anonymous poem published in 1712, entitled *Flora Triumphans*. Both are likely to have been produced to celebrate the completion of the landscape improvements carried out by London and Wise.<sup>14</sup> London was one of the founding members of the Brompton Park Nursery in 1681. By 1687 he had been appointed Director in partnership with Henry Wise, who oversaw the administration of the nursery. The two served as Royal gardeners to Queen Anne at various points in their career and were in great demand in elite circles.

In addition to London and Wise, Child is also recorded as having employed the gardener Adam Holt at Wanstead. Holt was born in 1691 and by 1710 he had set up a nursery business in Leytonstone, near Wanstead. His family had been trusted associates of the Childs, his father having kept the family's expense books between 1696 and 1715, and contemporary accounts refer to Holt working at

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<sup>13</sup> Mackley and Wilson, *Creating Paradise*, p.46.

<sup>14</sup> S. Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica: OR THE Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's RECREATION*, 3 vols (London, 1718), I, p.84.



Wanstead in 1713.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that Holt may have been employed to supervise the landscape improvements after London's death in 1714. A letter from the antiquarian, Smart Lethieullier, owner of nearby Aldersbrook manor, to Dr. Charles Lyttleton in 1715, describes Holt as the 'then surveyor of the works at Wanstead'.<sup>16</sup> Although it is difficult to establish specifically who designed what, London, Wise and Holt can all be credited as developing the early Wanstead landscape between 1706 and 1715.

In 1718, Stephen Switzer, the author of *Ichnographia Rustica*, commented on London's willingness to travel great distances to visit clients' gardens and noted that he could give 'directions once or twice a Year in most of the Gardens in England'.<sup>17</sup> Much of London and Wise's work is documented in Kip and Kniff's 1707 publication, *Britannia Illustrata*. The views engraved for this publication were perspective vistas of country houses and their surrounding landscapes. Made from impossible vantage points, they mapped out the extent of land ownership in considerable detail. Prior to the publication of *Britannia Illustrata*, viewing country houses and their gardens was only possible amongst an elite few who had the means to travel. The development of print culture in the early eighteenth century and the availability of such visual material must have fostered

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<sup>15</sup> Essex Record Office D/DK F1, Part of a Diary of a Wanstead Quaker, c.1707-1715. Hereafter ERO.

<sup>16</sup> S. Lethieullier, 'A letter from Smart Lethieullier, Esq; to Dr Charles Lyttleton, relating to some antiquities found in the county of Essex, Read November 27, 1746', *Archaeologia: or miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity*, 15 vols (London, 1779), I, p.73; See also: F. Cowell, 'Adam Holt (1691-1750) Gardener: His work at Coopersale House, Essex', *Garden History*, Vol.26, No.2 (Winter 1988), pp.214-217.

<sup>17</sup> Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica*, p.81.

growing interest amongst landowners in the appearance of their estates, particularly with regards to the landscape. As Switzer advised:

Tis certain, our Buildings excel for Plainness, Strength and good Architecture, all that is to be seen Abroad, especially in France, our great Competitor; and there seems to be nothing now so much wanting to compleat the Grandeur of the British Nation, as noble and magnificent Gardens, Statues, Water-works, and the like; in all which, 'tis to be fear'd, we are much inferior to those other great Nations. *Inventis addere*, has always been our English Motto; let us strive to keep it.<sup>18</sup>

When Kip and Knyff published *Britannia Illustrata*, work on the Wanstead landscape had only just begun. By employing London and Wise, Child could be confident that the developments carried out there would be in line with improvements lately made to landscapes of other great country seats, also illustrated by Kip and Knyff. London and Wise had already carried out commissions at Dawley (1695), New Park, Richmond (1692), Cholmondeley Hall (1693) and Dyrham Park (1700) (figs 50 and 51). Although Wanstead was one of London's last commissions prior to his death in 1711, it was nonetheless significant as it earned him the title of 'The English *Le Notre*', after the French landscape architect and principal gardener to King Louis XIV, whose most notable works included the gardens of Versailles.<sup>19</sup> According to Switzer, London's designs for Wanstead transformed the landscape into 'a Design worthy of an English baronet, and equal to the greatest French Peer'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica*, p.317.

<sup>19</sup> J. Harris, 'London, George (d. 1714)', ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37686>, accessed 5 February 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica*, p.84.

The three views of Wanstead by Kip and Knyff were published in 1728 when they appeared in the *Nouveau Theatre de Grande Bretagne*. This publication was first produced by the print seller David Mortier in 1708, and included a reprint of Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata* (1707), as well as a collection of new engravings. Its success resulted in the publication of several editions, regularly introducing new views of country houses and their surrounding landscapes. The views of Wanstead however, seem to have been produced some time before appearing in the 1728 edition of *Nouveau Theatre*. This is because they depict a number of the features referred to in *Flora Triumphans*, published in 1712 and, crucially, the Elizabethan manor house. Because Campbell's earliest design for Wanstead dates from 1713, we can assume that building work commenced shortly after. Therefore whilst the views by Kip and Knyff discussed in this thesis were published in 1728, they are best understood as most likely representing the landscape circa 1712-1713.

Using visual representations as sources of historical evidence is, of course, problematic. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, it was common practice amongst landscape artists to exaggerate the appearance of land in order to flatter its owner and enhance his reputation. In January 1699, the Duchess of Beaufort commented on Knyff's work at Badminton: 'I have had a Mr Knyff here, who is doing three drafts...my designs when these are all done is to have some of them bound in books & give them to show what a noble place my deare Lord has left'.<sup>21</sup> Considering that much of Kip and Knyff's work was carried out on a commission basis, it is indeed possible that their patrons would have

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<sup>21</sup> J. Harris and G. Jackson-Stops, *Britannia Illustrata: Knyff and Kip* (Bungay, 1984), p.9.

instructed the artists on how they wished their estates to be portrayed.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, it is tempting to mistrust the views in *Britannia Illustrata* because of the likelihood that they ‘show the ambitions rather than achievements of many landowners’.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, as Kip and Knyff’s views were often reproduced in print, the need to impress a range of buyers and viewers may have also led to exaggeration.

However, whilst some features illustrated in the Wanstead views do appear exaggerated, comparison with contemporary descriptions and consultation of archaeological evidence suggests that Kip and Knyff’s views still provide invaluable information about the landscape created by London and Wise.<sup>24</sup> The previous chapter drew on contemporary descriptions to establish that the avenues

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<sup>22</sup> Evidence that the series of engravings for *Britannia Illustrata* were commissioned can be found in newspaper articles from *The Post Boy* and the *Daily Courrant*. On 31 May 1704, and throughout June, *The Post Boy* advertised a call for views of noblemen’s seats to be engraved. The work appears to have continued until 1707 when *The Daily Courrant* reported on 1 February that ‘Mr Knyff, the Undertaker for the Drawing, Printing the Noblemen & Gentlemen’s Seats in this Kingdom, hath proceeded with the design to compleat the whole set of 100, but for want of subscriptions, and on account of his Health, (the time first propos’d being long since expir’d) is obliged to desist’. See Harris and Jackson-Stops, *Britannia Illustrata*, p.6.

<sup>23</sup> H. Honour, ‘Leonard Knyff’, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol.96, No.620 (November 1954), pp.335-338.

<sup>24</sup> In 2011, Dr R. Wiseman of Cambridge University carried out a series of LiDar scans of Wanstead Park. In these views there is evidence to support that some of the landscape that Kip and Knyff depict can be traced through laser photographs of the park, but to the naked eye it is much obscured by overgrowth. See also: Compass Archaeology, *Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, London Borough of Redbridge* (September 2014). Thanks to Compass Archaeology for allowing me to accompany them on the surveying excursions to Wanstead Golf Club and Park. Thanks also for a discussion with Richard Arnopp who comments that although the LiDar scans indicate some level of accuracy in Kip and Knyff’s views, some of the features such as the quincunx pattern of avenues in the direction of Leytonstone appear somewhat exaggerated.

and fishponds depicted in *Nouveau Theatre* were elements in the landscape introduced by Josiah Child.<sup>25</sup> None of the visitor accounts dating from the earlier period, however, refer to a bowling green, central canal or parterres when discussing Josiah Child's landscape. These are prominent features in the Kip and Knyff 's engravings, also identified in *Flora Triumphans*, and so it is logical to identify them as elements newly introduced by Richard.

Just as the author of *Flora Triumphans* invites the reader to 'make thy Wanstead Tour', my discussion is intended to lead the reader as if a visitor walking through the gardens depicted by Kip and Knyff. I will address particular features individually, beginning with those situated closest to the house and progressing outwards.<sup>26</sup> The first feature which visitors encountered on exiting the Elizabethan manor house were the four parterres situated immediately to the south (fig. 30). I will then guide the reader towards the central canals, one of which is located between these four parterres, the other positioned towards the river Roding (fig. 28). Finally, we will come to the bowling green (fig. 28).

The changes made to the early Wanstead landscape are perhaps best understood as a continuation of Josiah Child's landscaping, rather than as an improvement. This is confirmed by Defoe's account of Wanstead in 1724:

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<sup>25</sup> See descriptions by John Evelyn, Joseph Harris and James Gibson of Wanstead, referred to in chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous, *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden, An Heroick Poem Most Humbly Addrest to the honourable Sir Richard Child* (London, 1712), p.5.

Sir Josiah Child, as it were, prepar'd it in his life for the design of his son, tho' altogether unforeseen; by adding to the advantage of its situation innumerable rows of trees, planted in curious order for avenues and vistas, to the house, all leading up to the place where the old house stood, as to a center.<sup>27</sup>

## **Landscape features introduced by Richard Child, 1706-1715**

### Parterres

The parterre was an ornamental arrangement of flowerbeds, consisting of intricate, symmetrical patterns, popular in French and Dutch garden design during the seventeenth century. Similar to the knot gardens of the Elizabethan period, parterres were designed to be viewed from an elevated perspective. The parterres at Wanstead are a noticeable feature in all three of Kip and Knyff's views of the estate. The close proximity of the parterres to the Elizabethan manor was typical of gardening fashions of the period. In 1712, John James in his *Theory and Practice of Gardening* (a copy of which was held in the Wanstead library) described parterres as 'the richest pieces of a Garden', and advised that their proper location was near a building.<sup>28</sup> This suggests they were features often admired from within the domestic interior. In 1718, Switzer similarly commented on the benefits of planting parterres next to a house: 'Nothing is more pleasing to the Eye than a contracted regular Conduct and View, as soon as one goes out of a House or Building; and a forward direct View...is the best, be it either Parterre, Lawn, or any other open Space.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.40.

<sup>28</sup> J. James, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (London, 1712), p.34.

<sup>29</sup> Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica*, p.187.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence regarding who was responsible for the design of the parterres at Wanstead, but it seems likely that it was London and Wise. They were well known for their skills in the execution of these features, in particular those at Dawley, which, as John Harris has argued, show London as having perfected the form (fig. 50).<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the parterres at Hampton Court, which London and Wise had executed in 1702, as well as those at Melton Constable, are markedly similar to the designs at Wanstead (figs 52 and 53).

Wanstead's four parterres consisted of two different designs.<sup>31</sup> That closest to the house was reminiscent of what was commonly known as a *plain parterre* or *parterre à l'angloise*. This design was recognised as English on account of the simple grass work and use of gravel, which had been introduced by Queen Anne at Hampton Court and Kensington Palace in 1707. Philip Miller, in 1736, defined the plain parterre as 'more beautiful in England than in any other Countries, by reason of the Excellency of Turf, and that Decency, and unaffected simplicity that it affords to the Eye of the Spectator'.<sup>32</sup> French traveller, Pierre Fougereux described the grass at Wanstead as the 'plus beau garzon du monde', indicating how grass was becoming an increasingly admired feature of the English garden.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Harris, 'London, George'.

<sup>31</sup> National Art Library, P.J Fougereux, *Voyage d'Angleterre, d'Hollande et de Flandre, fait en l'annee 1728* (1728), p.106. Hereafter NAL. A copy of Fougereux's *Voyage* without illustrations is held in the Gerald Handel Collection at the Foundling Museum, London. Thanks to John Bonehill for his help with these sources.

<sup>32</sup> P. Miller, *The Gardener's Dictionary, Containing the Methods of cultivating and improving the kitchen, flower, fruit and pleasure garden* (London, 1752).

<sup>33</sup> Fougereux, *Voyage D'Angleterre*, p.106.

Having admired the excellence of the simple *parterre l'angloise* at Wanstead, a visitor would proceed towards the next set of parterres, situated nearer to the bowling green. The designs of these parterres differed significantly, and appear to have been more in line with those to be found in Franco-Dutch gardens. They consisted of a more complex geometric design of hedges and topiary. Unfortunately it is difficult to determine from the views made by Kip and Knyff what types of topiary were used for these two parterres, and no visitor accounts comment on this in detail. However, these designs are likely to have been influenced by London's visits to France, where he had met Le Notre at Versailles.<sup>34</sup>

A close inspection of Kip and Knyff's *View looking north* reveals statues displayed in both sets of parterre gardens (fig. 54). London and Wise provided readers of their *Retir'd Gardener* with an account of the invention of parterres which, according to fable, had been introduced by the Roman Goddess Flora; 'believing it to be an ornament proper for Gardens'.<sup>35</sup> Classical accounts such as that shared by London and Wise thus encouraged the use of the parterre garden as an appropriate space for the display of classical statues such as Flora, Diana or Daphne. And it is therefore likely that the sculptures depicted at Wanstead amongst the parterres represented suitable figures from mythology.

The parterres at Wanstead were removed during the second phase of landscape improvements, which occurred after the completion of Wanstead House.

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<sup>34</sup> Harris, 'London, George'.

<sup>35</sup> G. London and H. Wise, *The Retir'd Gardener*, 6 vols (London, 1706), I, p.229.



Although they are not visible on James Craddock's map of 1725 (fig. 31), Fougeroux's account indicates that the parterres were still in situ in 1728. However, they do not appear on John Rocque's map of Wanstead in 1735, thereby indicating that they must have been removed from the Wanstead landscape between 1728 and 1735.<sup>36</sup> Although a short-lived feature, they were nonetheless well received at the time of their introduction. This is suggested in *Flora Triumphans*, in which the author refers to the parterres as a 'fragrant field, each Rich Perfume/ The Noblest Growth from Nature's tend'rest womb', as well as in the descriptions provided by Macky and Fougeroux.<sup>37</sup>

### Canals

The two central canals at Wanstead are clearly visible in Kip and Knyff's views and were praised by the author of *Flora Triumphans* as 'the Garden's central monument' (fig. 28).<sup>38</sup> The canal nearest the Elizabethan manor ran between the four parterres and was surrounded by an elevated grass terrace: 'In mural banks, inclos'd, serenely spread.'<sup>39</sup> The second canal was situated beyond the bowling green and central avenue, near the River Roding. In 1748, Peter Kalm commented upon the construction of the Wanstead canals, confirming that these were a feature introduced as part of Richard Child's landscape developments:

The difficulty met him at the place where his house should be built, that there was no water; but money could cure all such things. Where, previous to that time there was

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<sup>36</sup> S. Jeffery, *The Gardens of Wanstead, Proceedings of A Study Day, 1999* (London, 2003), p.14.

<sup>37</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.5.

<sup>38</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.7.

scarcely anything, but a ditch with a little water in it, we now saw a large flowing river, all made with art and human labour.<sup>40</sup>

Although London and Wise appear to have been responsible for a significant amount of the Wanstead landscape development, it seems most likely that the canal networks were created by Adam Holt. In 1713, an unidentified Quaker living in Wanstead made reference to the construction of a canal near the house, commenting in his diary that ‘Mr Adam Holt (Sir Richard Child’s Gardiner) began June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1713 to put Gardiners & Labourers into my field and to make a Canal & kitchen Garden.’<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, landscape improvements carried out by Holt for Robert Ashurst at Hedingham in 1726 included the construction of an octagonal basin attached to the end of a canal. The design, visible in a survey made by George Sangster in 1766, is comparable to the canal situated between the four parterres and depicted in Kip and Knyff’s view looking east (figs 55 and 28).<sup>42</sup>

The close proximity of the estate to the River Roding is emphasised in the anonymous view of Wanstead taken from an elevated viewpoint overlooking the river and canals (fig. 23). This proximity would have been crucial to the construction of the canals. The source of the Roding is alluded to in *Flora Triumphans*; ‘both [the canals] from one source their Union Waters flow’.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>40</sup> P. Kalm, *Account of his visit to England on his way to America* (1748), p.175.

<sup>41</sup> ERO D/DK F1, Part of a Diary of a Wanstead Quaker, c.1707-1715.

<sup>42</sup> Cowell, ‘Adam Holt (1691-1750) Gardener’, p.215; ERO D/DMh F 31, Survey of Hedingham Castle, Essex, by George Sangster (1766).

<sup>43</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.8

indicates that the construction of the canals at Wanstead occurred more or less at the same time.

Much like the extensive network of avenues, the canals emphasised the extent of the family's landownership, whilst also creating pleasing views. The aesthetic qualities of the canals are praised in *Flora Triumphans*; 'silver streams, Brighten'd like CYNTHIA by SOL'S borrowed Beams'.<sup>44</sup> This gives the reader an impression of the waterworks as dazzling, near mystical even. Their inclusion in the poem indicates that they were newly introduced at the time of the text's publication in 1712. Although that nearest to the house was subsequently removed, the more distant canal depicted in Kip and Knyff's view looking east did remain (figs 56a-b).

#### The bowling green

A visitor proceeding along the terraced walks overlooking the parterres and central canal would soon be met by the circular bowling green depicted most clearly in Kip and Knyff's view looking north (fig 30). The bowling green is likely to have been another feature commissioned by Richard Child, once he had set about making landscape developments in 1706. In 1722, Macky commented upon this feature, stating:

At the bottom of the Canal is a Bowling-green, incircled with Grotto's & seats, with antique statues between each seat: And this bowling green is separated by a balustrade of

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<sup>44</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.8

iron from another long green walk which leads you to another long Canal at nigh half a mile distance.<sup>45</sup>

Notably, the bowling green at Wanstead did not follow recommendations made in London and Wise's *Retired Gardener* which stated that a bowling green ought to be situated so as not to obstruct any view of the overall garden:

Bowling greens are never made but in spacious gardens, and always are laid in those places of 'em which are most out of the way, because they would else take away the Prospect, by the tallness of the mess which ought to be placed around them.<sup>46</sup>

The central positioning of the bowling green at Wanstead instead more closely complied with views outlined in James's *Theory and Practice of Gardening*.<sup>47</sup> James described the bowling green as 'one of the most agreeable compartments of a Garden, and, when tis rightly placed, nothing is more pleasant to the eye', and 'no hindrance to the Prospect'.<sup>48</sup> The bowling green at Wanstead, intricately designed, surrounded by iron wrought fencing and classical sculpture, was much like those described by James as 'composed' (fig. 57).<sup>49</sup> James also advised that this type of bowling green should be 'placed at the End of a large parterre, or to fill up a great Space, that you would keep entirely open', again recalling the positioning of that at Wanstead.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> J. Macky, *A Journey through England. In familiar letters. From a gentleman here, to his friend abroad* (London, 1722), p.23.

<sup>46</sup> London and Wise, *Retir'd Gardener*, p.431.

<sup>47</sup> D. F Keeling, *Wanstead House: The Owners and their Books* (London, 1994), p.21.

<sup>48</sup> James, *Theory and Practice of Gardening*, p.62.

<sup>49</sup> James, *Theory and Practice of Gardening*, p.62.

<sup>50</sup> James, *Theory and Practice of Gardening*, p.62.

This suggests that Child had some input into the designs implemented in the new Wanstead landscape. His preference for the concept outlined by James was presumably rooted in the associations attached to bowling greens. Bowling was considered to be a gentlemanly pursuit, and one which Child would have been keen to provide for his guests.<sup>51</sup> Use of the bowling green can be seen in Kip and Knyff's view, and a greater insight into how these spaces were used as sites of sociability is provided by Balthasar Nebot's view of the bowling green at Hartwell, in which a group of gentlemen is seen engaging in conversation and taking snuff as they bowl (fig. 58).<sup>52</sup> Linda Cabe Halpern has discussed the ways in which the estate landscape needed to facilitate the demonstration of virtuous activities such as exercise and sociable exchange in order to justify the expense.<sup>53</sup>

Although James's publication provides a range of design suggestions for bowling greens, a common feature to all was a surrounding walkway and the provision of seating from which spectators could view the game. Evidence of seating and a surrounding pathway can be seen in Kip and Knyff's view looking north (fig. 59). These features would have allowed passers-by to witness the gentlemanly leisured activities taking place at Wanstead, and would have also meant that, despite the

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<sup>51</sup> Anne Laurence comments on how figures in a landscape view represented the ways in which the space was used, or intended to be used. The inclusion of male figures only on the Wanstead bowling green emphasise that this was a space designed for the entertainment of only men and, more specifically, only gentlemen. See A. Laurence, 'Space, Status and Gender in English Topographical Paintings c.1660 – c.1740', *Architectural History*, Vol. 46 (2003), pp.81-94.

<sup>52</sup> See Halpern's discussion of Nebot's view in: L. Cabe Halpern, 'Uses of Paintings in Garden History' in *Garden History: issues, approaches, methods*, ed., J. Dixon Hunt (Washington, 1992), pp.200-201.

<sup>53</sup> Halpern, 'Uses of Paintings in Garden History', p.201.

bowling green being located in a central position, it would not have interrupted the experience of the grounds for others, but rather enhanced it.

### **Influences on the Wanstead Landscape**

Having addressed the features depicted in Kip and Knyff's views of Wanstead, I will now trace and describe influences on this development of the landscape, which took place before the construction of Wanstead House. I want to argue that the landscape was the complex product of a variety of stylistic models, derived from Franco-Dutch and Italian gardens. The work carried out on the gardens at Wanstead between 1706 and 1715 was driven by Child's need for a landscape appropriate to a great country house. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, the initiatives of his social peers and superiors heavily influenced the design of the estate landscape.<sup>54</sup> Ideas and inspiration spread through social networks, and there was some degree of competition.<sup>55</sup> At the time of the work on the grounds at Wanstead, Child had not yet obtained the title of Viscount Castlemaine, and this perhaps particularly encouraged him to emulate contemporary tastes espoused by England's elite.

Wanstead's proximity to London meant that it attracted many visitors and so was subject to great scrutiny. Indeed, *Flora Triumphans* highlights the public attention Wanstead was receiving as early as 1712: 'Hither all equal Homagers resort: CHILD to his Rural Bowrs ev'n calls a COURT.'<sup>56</sup> It was, therefore, of great

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<sup>54</sup> D. Jacques, 'Who knows what a Dutch garden is?', *Garden History*, Vol. 30, No.2 (Winter 2002), pp.114-30.

<sup>55</sup> Jacques, 'Who knows what a Dutch garden is?' p.126.

<sup>56</sup> *Flora Triumphans*, p.3.

importance that Wanstead complied with contemporary landscape fashion in order to ensure visitors to the estate perceived it as impressive and up to date. In the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, published in 1715, Colen Campbell compliments the Wanstead landscape when he describes the location of Wanstead House as ‘in a most charming situation, where the noblest Gardens now in the Kingdom’.<sup>57</sup>

There are several reasons why Wanstead and other country house gardens displayed a variety of influences. One was the political turmoil of the seventeenth century brought about by the Civil War and Restoration, which is likely to have hindered the development of a more distinct national style. As a result, English gardens were perhaps more receptive to a range of European influences, many introduced on the return of Charles II in 1660, as well as by former English landowners who had been in exile during the War. Further European fashions were transmitted thanks to the accession of William Prince of Orange to the English throne in 1688, whose garden at Het Loo in the Netherlands was an exemplar of Franco-Dutch fashion.<sup>58</sup>

The mixture of European gardening styles at Wanstead can be particularly seen in the use of the parterres and canals. Certainly, the canals had some of the hallmarks of Dutch gardening design. The high values and long and thin parcels of land available in the Netherlands, combined with the demand for good drainage due to excessive amounts of water, meant that the Dutch fashion for canals had

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<sup>57</sup> C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 3 vols (London, 1715), I, p.4.

<sup>58</sup> T. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in eighteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995), p.26.

been shaped out of necessity.<sup>59</sup> However, Le Notre's construction of the canal system at Versailles in 1664 provided a more proximate example and, according to David Jacques, parkland canals from 1680 owe more to aspirations to imitate French gardening styles, than Dutch (fig. 41).<sup>60</sup> In addition, the gardens of Versailles demonstrated highly skilful hydraulic engineering in the introduction of fountains into the canals, a feature subsequently adopted for English gardens. A close inspection of the central canal in Kip and Knyff's illustration indicates that fountains like those at Versailles were introduced at Wanstead. Therefore, whilst the canal was generally considered a feature typical of Dutch design, it was also greatly influenced by the landscapes of the French monarchy.<sup>61</sup>

The two different styles of parterre at Wanstead also represent a combination of influences. The more complex, geometric designs of those closest to the bowling green were similar to those popular in France and Holland. Meanwhile, the two parterres situated nearest to the Elizabethan manor were in an English idiom. This style of parterre had in fact, been abandoned in the 1680s and 1690s when

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<sup>59</sup> Jacques, 'Who knows what a Dutch garden is?', p.117.

<sup>60</sup> Jacques, 'Who knows what a Dutch garden is?', p.117.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Williamson and David Jacques address the differences between French and Dutch gardens. Although they both stemmed from Italian concepts of garden design, they differed due to particular geographical factors. Williamson writes, 'such national styles, once forged, could be exported beyond the countries whose distinctive characteristics had given them birth'. David Jacques also addresses the geographical factors that influenced garden design and notes that once a country had adapted a feature, it developed its own national style, 'garden fashion is seldom imported without adaptation'. It is important to understand that although features in the Wanstead landscape derived from various European influences, they were not direct representations but in fact likely to have been adapted to suit the Wanstead environment. See: Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, pp.19-47; Jacques, 'Who Knows What a Dutch Garden Is?' pp.114-130.



gardeners were seeking to mimic Versailles by adopting more elaborate designs such as those situated next to the Wanstead bowling green.<sup>62</sup>

Queen Anne's dislike for the French fashion for the boxed parterre garden, however, is likely to have had considerable impact. The simplification of the parterres at Kensington and Hampton Court probably shocked those familiar with William and Mary's gardens of the late seventeenth century, but this gradually became perceived as being 'more the English way', as it had been a style practised earlier in the seventeenth century.<sup>63</sup> The creation of a more English style parterre alongside the Franco-Dutch parterres demonstrated that Child was comfortable with combining distinctly native gardening styles alongside those imported from the continent. It also indicates that, although features typical of Franco-Dutch gardens were being widely adopted in English landscapes, gardeners in this country were gradually returning to and redeveloping their own distinct national style.

The bowling green was perhaps the only feature in the Wanstead landscape not to have been subject to European influences. George London described it as a distinctly English phenomenon which, contrary to other landscape features, was 'a compartment of a Garden which the French learn'd of the English, & therefore have no other word to express it but Bowlingrin'.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> D. Jacques, 'Our Late Pious Queen Whose Love to Gard'ning Was Not a Little': Queen Anne in her Parks and Gardens', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol.37 (June 2014), p.206.

<sup>63</sup> Jacques, 'Our Late Pious Queen', p.207.

<sup>64</sup> London and Wise, *Retir'd Gardener*, p.430.

Other foreign influences can be observed in the display of classical sculpture in the landscape, which no doubt inspired *Flora Triumphans*, infused with mythological associations. By 1712, the Grand Tour was rapidly gaining widespread popularity. Whilst Richard Child himself did not undertake a Tour, his use of classical statues indicate that he was fully aware of the need to demonstrate knowledge of classical antiquity in order to impress his visitors. According to Jeremy Black, a combination of domestic and international rivalries had created a marked degree of paranoia in the political culture of Europe during the seventeenth century, but, with growing political stability, the British appeared less threatened: at home by Catholicism and autocracy; abroad by Spain or France.<sup>65</sup> Richard Lassels's *Voyage of Italy* (1670), which is often credited as having coined the term 'Grand Tour', helped to establish the phenomenon, as did Joseph Addison's *Several Parts of Italy* (1706). By 1729, Conyers Middleton compared the voyage of Italy to the journey of life.<sup>66</sup> The perception that large numbers were beginning to travel to Italy in the early eighteenth century fuelled belief in the social and cultural significance of the Grand Tour and enforced its necessity amongst the elite. This was primarily conceived as an excursion for young men, generally lasting two or three years, and perceived to be a means of 'polishing' them before they entered full adulthood back in England.<sup>67</sup> Italian art and architecture were core components of this education and, as a result, the display of such knowledge in England was perceived to be an indicator of gentlemanly status, adopted with enthusiasm by owners of the great estates.

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<sup>65</sup> J. Black, *The British abroad: the Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (Sutton, 2003), p.3.

<sup>66</sup> R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: the British in Italy, c.1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012), p.24.

<sup>67</sup> For the Grand Tour see: Black, *The British abroad*, passim.; J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800* (London and New Haven, 1997); A. Wilton and I. Bignamini ed., *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997).

Having addressed the developments carried out to the Wanstead landscape prior to the construction of Colen Campbell's new design for the house, it is important to consider why, like his father, Richard Child prioritised landscape over building when he first inherited the estate. According to Wilson and Mackley, it was, in fact, common amongst estate owners to landscape the park prior to the construction of a new house.<sup>68</sup> It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that work on the landscape at Child's property began prior to the construction of the new building. But were the developments carried out by London and Wise designed to accommodate a new house of a specific architectural style?

London and Wise were employed at Wanstead in 1706 and Campbell's first design for Wanstead dates from 1713. It seems unlikely that a specific architectural style for a new house had yet been decided upon when London and Wise were commissioned. As a result, it seems most probable that the early Wanstead landscape was designed primarily to comply with the fashions of other English estate landscapes, and to accommodate an anticipated great house, regardless of the architectural style that would be used for it.

### **Building Wanstead House, 1713 – 1722**

Wanstead's demolition in 1824 sadly erased a building of great significance from the English landscape. Visual representations of the house are plentiful, but they can be misleading, and the surviving material has been widely dispersed.

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<sup>68</sup> Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, p.72.

Nonetheless, primary evidence can be drawn upon in order to assist our understanding of the building. The majority of sources regarding the design of Wanstead House can be found in two of the three volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus* published in 1715 and 1725, which feature Colen Campbell's architectural designs. These form the basis of my discussion, as they shed invaluable light on the various proposals made during the development of Wanstead.

The first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, published in 1715, included two designs for the Wanstead exterior, two floor plans, a section and a view of the greenhouse.<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that the greenhouse (first illustrated in 1715), was, according to Campbell, 'design'd by another Hand' (figs 60 and 61). John Harris attributes the design to William Talman, one of the leading country house architects of the late seventeenth century, who served as the comptroller of the King's works from 1689 until William III's death in 1702.<sup>70</sup> Harris's reasoning for this attribution is based on the close relationship between Talman and London, who together worked at Chatsworth, Dyrham, Castle Ashby, Castle Howard and Hampton Court.<sup>71</sup> A comparison between the greenhouse at Wanstead and the greenhouses and other garden buildings at Chatsworth, Castle Ashby and Dyrham leads Harris to describe that designed for Child as 'so Talmanic as to warrant a firm attribution to him'.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Vol. 1, p.4; J. Harris, *Palladians*, (London, 1981), p.62.

<sup>70</sup> For Talman see: P. Smith, 'Talman, William (bap. 1650, d. 1719)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26956](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26956), accessed 14 October 2014.

<sup>71</sup> J. Harris, *William Talman, Maverick Architect* (London, 1982) p.43

<sup>72</sup> Harris, *William Talman*, p.45

There is a significant lack of documentary evidence regarding Talman's involvement at Wanstead. However, given Child's ambitious nature, it seems quite possible that Talman would have been a choice architect in the early stages of the estate's development.<sup>73</sup> The employment of Campbell to rebuild Wanstead House, however, indicates Child 'turning from the chief architect of the old Williamite Court to the proponent of the new style'.<sup>74</sup> By the time Campbell executed the first design for Wanstead, Talman's architectural style had fallen from favour. Presumably, he was therefore no longer considered to be an appropriate choice of architect for such an ambitious project.

The first drawing for the Wanstead engravings was produced in 1713, indicating that work had begun on the design of house prior to the publication of the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1715 (fig. 62).<sup>75</sup> The earliest record which refers to the completion of the external facade comes from John Macky in 1722; 'the palace itself is a long Body of a House, without any Wings, consisting of two Fronts...It consists only of two stories, the Ground floor for the family, and the upper storey for the rooms of state'.<sup>76</sup> Campbell's drawing and Macky's account thus indicate that the design and construction of the mansion occurred between 1713 and 1722.

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<sup>73</sup> For further information on the greenhouse see: Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.15.

<sup>74</sup> Harris, *Palladians*, p.62.

<sup>75</sup> RIBA Image Library, Victoria & Albert Museum SC13/31, Wanstead, (Essex).

<sup>76</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.20.

Child no doubt saw the opportunity to transform the old Wanstead manor, described as ‘old fashioned’, as integral to his success amongst the elite.<sup>77</sup> Barbara Arciszewska has claimed that he was probably concerned to make his claims to peerage visible in the form of a residence built in a style fashionable at the court of the monarch, Queen Anne.<sup>78</sup> There are three key factors, which, I would argue, encouraged Child to rebuild Wanstead House. The first relates to the layout of the Elizabethan manor. By the early eighteenth century, this would have been considerably out of date. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the absence of visual evidence makes it difficult to establish the appearance of the old house at Wanstead. However, if we are to consider the developments in interior planning that took place between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, then it is reasonable to assume that its interior no longer measured up to contemporary ideas of hospitality, and popular notions of public and private space.<sup>79</sup>

The popularity of the enfilade layout, adopted from seventeenth-century royal French palaces such as Versailles, meant that the interior layouts of great houses were being reconsidered at this time, and members of different social hierarchies within the household were no longer sharing the same domestic space. Such separation was advised by Roger North, who promoted the introduction of

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<sup>77</sup> R. Latham ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection* (London: Penguin, 2003), p.490.

<sup>78</sup> B. Arciszewska, *The Hanoverian Court and the Triumph of Palladio: The Palladian Revival in Hanover and England, c.1700* (Warsaw, 2002), p.298.

<sup>79</sup> Felicity Heal and Mark Girouard comment on how the layout of Elizabethan and Tudor homes was designed to accommodate all those associated with the house, be it family, guests, servants, farmers or tenants. The great hall in the Elizabethan home was a space used for dining by all and, whilst a social hierarchy existed, it did so in a seemingly harmoniously manner. See: F. Heal, *Hospitality in the Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990); M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (London and New Haven, 1978).

multiple levels, double piles, corridors and stairs as a means of introducing divisions within the household; 'your friends and persons of esteem should pass without being annoyed with the sight of foul persons, and things, which must and will be moving in some part of a large and uninhabited dwelling'.<sup>80</sup> Notable country seats such as Castle Howard and Blenheim had adopted such layouts, separating utilitarian spaces from those used by the family and friends, setting a trend amongst the new houses being constructed during the early eighteenth-century building boom (figs 63 and 64). The layout of the Wanstead manor had undergone few changes since the Earl of Leicester's ownership in the sixteenth century and must therefore have been unsuitable for the ambitious Richard Child.

Second, the construction of a new country house reflected the continuing success of the Child family. Campbell's designs for the new house as published in the 1715 volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* would have been accessible to a wide audience. The list of subscribers to Campbell's text included a noble clientele and, prior to its release, they would have been able to see 'a list of persons of quality and gentry who have already subscribed'.<sup>81</sup> The availability of these views of Wanstead would have helped to spread the news - particularly amongst the elite - that Child was engaged in a costly transformation of his Elizabethan manor into a fashionable classical mansion.

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<sup>80</sup> R. North, *Of Building: Roger North's Writings on Architecture*, ed. H. Colvin and J. Newman (Oxford, 1981), p.122.

<sup>81</sup> E. Harris, 'Vitruvius Britannicus before Colen Campbell', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.128, No. 998 (May 1986), pp.336 -340.

The third factor was the size of the old Wanstead manor and the need for Child to acquire a larger residence. Although there is no evidence of the size of the previous building, it is likely that Campbell's new design was significantly larger. Size was a necessary factor in ensuring that Wanstead would be recognised as a country house rather than a suburban residence: contemporaries made a clear distinction between the two. The country house was often remote from London, because there was little need for frequent access into the city. It could therefore be built to a larger scale.

Henry Overton's 1713 map of the county indicates that Wanstead was situated near a major cross road and a post road, further demonstrating the easy access that was enjoyed to and from the city (fig. 32).<sup>82</sup> Child is likely to have needed to visit London regularly on account of his positions in parliament as MP for Maldon and Essex between 1708 and 1734. The construction of a new mansion, however, would have also helped to foster an image of himself as a country gentleman. The ability to rebuild, rather than to simply adapt the Elizabethan manor, would have been a rich indicator of his wealth, and the scale of the newly built Wanstead would have secured its status as a country house.

#### Wanstead House in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 1715-1725

The Wanstead commission arrived at an opportune moment for Campbell who, having arrived in London, was recruited to assist with the ambitious project, *Vitruvius Britannicus*. This publication was a collaborative effort between a

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<sup>82</sup> British Library Maps Collection K.Top.13.2, A New Map of the County of Essex by Henry Overton (1713). Hereafter BL Maps.



number of London print dealers: David Mortier and his deputy Peter Dunoyer; Joseph Smith; and Andrew Johnston. All four had been involved in the publication of Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata* in 1707 and Captain John Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, another collection of country house views, in 1693. Mortier and Dunoyer were the leading distributors of French architectural books in London. They were therefore well positioned to advise on the composition of *Vitruvius*, as well as ensuring its widespread distribution both in England and abroad.<sup>83</sup> The project was initially intended to survey the extant architectural triumphs of Britain, but the release of Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata* had generated interest in topographical views of estates around the country. As a result, *Vitruvius Britannicus* was to provide a more detailed architectural survey of these sites.

The first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* was one of the most ambitious publications of engraved material to have been published in Britain by that date.<sup>84</sup> Smith, Dunoyer, Mortimer and Johnston, however, were in need of an architectural draughtsman to execute the classical designs for the publication, now set to rival Giacomo Leoni's *Quattro Libri*, a translation of Andrea Palladio's influential publication, also in the process of being published. This project was a threat to *Vitruvius*, as the first publication in England to be dedicated to Palladio's architectural treatise. It therefore became increasingly important that *Vitruvius* not only celebrated Britain's already existing architectural triumphs, but that it was

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<sup>83</sup> Harris, 'Vitruvius Britannicus before Colen Campbell', p.341.

<sup>84</sup> Harris, 'Vitruvius Britannicus before Colen Campbell', p.340.

also forward looking, providing subscribers with copious examples of the new, classical architectural style that was gaining popularity around this time.<sup>85</sup>

In addition, George I, ascending to the British throne in 1714, had already demonstrated an interest in classical architecture in Hanover. The architect William Benson spent a period of his tour of Europe in Hanover between 1704 and 1706, and he reported on the styles of architecture being practiced there.<sup>86</sup> The Hanoverian King's tastes promoted the inclusion of architectural designs in *Vitruvius Britannicus* which complied with the new courtly idiom, and the first volume was duly dedicated by Campbell to George I: 'To his most Sacred Majesty King George, Vitruvius Britannicus OR THE British Architect Is most humbly Inscrib'd By, May it Please your Majesty, Your Majesties faithfull & obedient Subject, Colen Campbell.'<sup>87</sup> According to Howard Colvin, the King acknowledged the compliment by giving Campbell one gift of thirty guineas in 1717, and another of thirty pounds in 1725.<sup>88</sup>

The recruitment of Colen Campbell to include additional plates for the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* was a significant point in Wanstead's history. Whether Child had commissioned Campbell prior to his involvement in the publication is unclear. However, we can be certain that, as a result of his work for the volume, Campbell was encouraged to produce a set of ambitious designs for Wanstead in an innovative style. The inclusion of the Wanstead designs in

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<sup>85</sup> Harris, 'Vitruvius Britannicus before Colen Campbell', p.342.

<sup>86</sup> C. Fry, 'Spanning the Political Divide: Neo-Palladianism and the Early Eighteenth-Century Landscape', *Garden History*, Vol.21, No.2 (Winter 2003), pp.180-192.

<sup>87</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, frontispiece.

<sup>88</sup> H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (London, 1978), p.214.

volume one meant they would be seen alongside images of existing architectural masterpieces in England, positioning Wanstead as a triumph even before the house had even been completed. I will now discuss the designs featured in the successive volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in order to chart Wanstead's development, and to explore various influences upon it.

#### Wanstead I: Plate 22, Elevation of Wanstead House

The earliest design for Wanstead was produced in 1713 (fig. 62), and it was included in the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, published in 1715, as plate 22 (fig. 1). John Harris claims that there is nothing in English architecture quite like the unadorned design of the first Wanstead proposal.<sup>89</sup> It is in a simple rectangle form: a double pile plan with a temple portico, measuring two hundred feet in length. John Summerson, meanwhile, stated that the first design for Wanstead allowed Campbell to display himself as the author of the purest classical house of the day, noting that, although the design looked back to John Vanbrugh's Castle Howard for inspiration (fig. 65), there was a 'severe process of readjustment and an obvious revulsion from the mobile character' of that property.<sup>90</sup> Unlike Vanbrugh's buildings, including Blenheim Palace, which appeared alongside Wanstead in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Campbell's first design was strikingly simple, emphasising geometric balance and symmetry.

A notable feature of this design is the temple portico supported by six Corinthian columns positioned in the central facade of the house, described in the second

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<sup>89</sup> Harris, *Palladians*, p.16.

<sup>90</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.322.

design for Wanstead as ‘the first of its kind to be had in England’.<sup>91</sup> The frieze within the portico depicts a classical scene, of which no description unfortunately seems to have survived. Urns and classical statues adorn the roof.

#### Wanstead II (1715): Plate no. 25

It has been suggested that the first design for the façade at Wanstead was rejected because it was neither magnificent nor extensive enough.<sup>92</sup> Plate 25 of volume one provided readers with a second elevation (fig. 2). Campbell’s description for this second design reads as follows:

extended 260 Foot, raised from the Court by a large Rustick Basement 15 Foot in Height:  
The Situation requiring this Height, to afford the State Apartments a Prospect to these excellent Gardens. You ascend from the Court by double Stairs of each side, which land in the Portico; and from thence into the great Hall, 51 Foot long and 36 wide, and in Height the same:

The second design for Wanstead shows the house largely as it was constructed, with the exception of the central dome. The plate depicts a more elaborate sequence of windows on the principal floor, alternating between triangular and semi-circular frames, much like those designed by Campbell for Burlington House (1717) and Hedworth House (1715) (figs 66 and 67). The house was extended from the original intended 200 feet to 260 feet in length, and its centre was raised, changing the design from the rectangular form depicted in the first proposal into one which more closely imitated Vanbrugh’s Castle Howard (fig.

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<sup>91</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, p.4.

<sup>92</sup> P. Breman and Denise Addis eds, *Guide to Vitruvius Britannicus: Annotated and analytic index to the plates* (New York, 1972), p.24.

65).<sup>93</sup> This was perhaps an attempt to emphasize the central temple-like block of the house. An inventory of Wanstead House made in 1795 indicates that the rooms on the rustic level were largely family rooms, as well as providing some service areas such as the kitchen, pantry and butler's room. The top floor seems to have consisted of servants' rooms, the furnishing of which was basic, the windows significantly smaller.<sup>94</sup> The elevated principal floor thus placed emphasis on the more public spaces of the house, intended for parade and sociability.

#### Plates no. 21 and 23: Floor plan

Two plans for the principal floor at Wanstead were also included in the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*: plates 21 and 23 (figs 68 and 69). In plate 21, the proposed layout is comprised of four quarters, with three interlocking rooms positioned on either side of the north and south fronts. On the east and west sides, the house is divided into four smaller rooms. The enfilade passages appear continuous throughout. Also worthy of note are the four internal staircases. These are strikingly different, indicating that two were intended for family and public use, and the other two, located on the eastern and western sides of the house, for the servants' access and utilitarian purposes. In both floor plans, the servants' staircases are hidden from public view, demonstrating that designs for Wanstead were responding to new concerns regarding the separation of public and private spaces in the home.

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<sup>93</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.322.

<sup>94</sup> NA C 111/215, LONG v PHIPPS: Inventories of household furniture, plate, linen, china, books, wines and effects of Sir James Tilney-Long, deceased, at Draycot House near Chippenham, Wilts, and Wanstead House, Essex (1795).

Plate 23 provides another proposal for the layout of the house (fig. 69). In this design, the house has been extended to two hundred and sixty feet long and consists of five rooms in the two front facing state apartments and four rooms in the rear facing apartments. Campbell describes the plan as follows:

the Salon, being an exact cube of 30 Foot, attended with two noble Apartments of State, all fronting the Gardens. To the great Court are excellent Apartments for Sir Richard and my Lady with great Conveniences: And the whole Plan is closed with a decent Chappel in one End, and a handsome Library in the other: The Offices are below, equal to the Court and the Mezonins above.<sup>95</sup>

When Macky described the principal floor at Wanstead, he commented on the five ‘Rooms of State of each side...ending in a long Gallery on the South end and a Chappel on the North end’.<sup>96</sup> His account of 1722 indicates that, aside from the library depicted by Campbell, the layout of Wanstead House was constructed more or less as shown in this second plan.

The measurements provided for the rooms in this engraving specify that the great hall spanned 36 feet wide and 52 feet high. The saloon measured 30 feet both in width and height, and the other rooms around 24 feet in height.<sup>97</sup> The height of the hall suited the temple front of the house, giving it a lofty and grand appearance merited by its central position and significance.

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<sup>95</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, p.4.

<sup>96</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

<sup>97</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, pl.23.

A notable difference between plates 21 and 23 is the design for the south facing steps providing access into the gardens. In plate 21, the rear staircases are similar in form to those at the front of the house, but in plate 23 they are curved. Although some prints of Wanstead House depict the staircase as it appears in plate 23, the majority of views indicate that these staircases were, in fact, built in the fashion depicted in plate 21.

The inclusion of *two* floor plans for Wanstead in volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus* is no doubt indicative of contemporary interest in domestic space in the early eighteenth century. It is also worth noting that Campbell only published plans for the principal floor. This is probably because it was the most public space of the house, designed to impress visitors and to encourage movement through the four apartments. By the early eighteenth century, advice such as that provided by North recommended that all rooms of parade be situated on the same level for the convenience of visitors: ‘Another fault is when principal or rooms of parade are made over one and other, which cannot be well. Nor is it convenient to goe up stairs for the parade, but to have it upon your first landing, because it is most easy and gracefull in the access.’<sup>98</sup>

Rudolf Arnheim, architectural historian, has commented that plans reveal a building as an instrument of human activity, communicating ideas of function and movement that a section cannot provide.<sup>99</sup> The depiction of an enfilade floor plan indicates that Wanstead imitated the baroque royal residences of France, and that

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<sup>98</sup> North, *Of Building*, p.131.

<sup>99</sup> R. Arnheim, *The Dynamics of Architectural Form* (Berkeley and London, 1977), p.55.

the primary purpose of the principal floor was to entertain and impress social peers.

Plate no. 26: Section

Plate 26 of volume one provided readers with a section of the great hall and saloon (fig. 70). This is, in fact, the earliest view of the Wanstead interior. Giles Worsley noted that this section shows that, although Campbell placed great emphasis on producing a classical exterior, he seems to have been more flexible in his approach to the interior and did not, here, produce a strictly Palladian design. Worsley thus proposes that Wanstead is best seen as a synthesis of design influences.<sup>100</sup>

Campbell's section depicts the hall and saloon with raised decorative moulding and panelling; common characteristics of English baroque interiors of the late seventeenth century.<sup>101</sup> This, combined with the enfilade layout of the house, indicates that, whilst Wanstead's exterior imitated classical design features that would later be defined as Neo-Palladian, its interior was composed of various baroque elements.<sup>102</sup> According to both Worsley and Christopher Hussey, it was common for classical elements to be used as frameworks for more lavish

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<sup>100</sup> Worsley notes that Ebberston Lodge, Yorkshire is the only surviving interior by Campbell dating from before 1722. It therefore gives some insight into how Campbell had designed the Wanstead interior prior to Kent's employment. See: G. Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain* (New Haven and London, 1995), p.200.

<sup>101</sup> Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain*, p.198.

<sup>102</sup> Worsley describes the pair of apartments running along the principal front as a dominant feature of baroque houses, found at Wanstead, Nostell and Wentworth Woodhouse. See: Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain*, p.234.



decoration, particularly involving plasterwork, and not every architect felt that an interior and exterior needed necessarily entirely to complement one another.<sup>103</sup>

The section by Campbell suggests his intentions for what was to lie behind the walls of the uniform, symmetrical exterior. For example, it depicts what appears to be a classical painting hanging in the saloon. This is an interesting hint at the types of decoration expected of a mansion of this kind, and, indeed, as will be demonstrated, later developments met these expectations. The section also indicates that Campbell designed doorframes and fireplaces, an important component of the overall scheme of rooms. North, for example, advised:

That the chimney fall in the middle of the side opposite to the door of the first entrance, that the decoration of it may instantly take the eye, and the finishing on either side, whether wainscote, painting, or portraits, may admit an uniforme disposition, which is an elegance scarce otherwise to be had.<sup>104</sup>

Whilst his designs may have been supplanted when William Kent was employed around 1720 to furnish Wanstead, this image remains noteworthy evidence of Campbell's involvement in interior décor. The hall and saloon were central features of the principal floor at Wanstead. They were also the only rooms for which Campbell drew a section, highlighting their importance as points of access for entering and exiting the house.

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<sup>103</sup> Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain*, p.204; C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Early Georgian 1715-1760* (London, 1955), p.13.

<sup>104</sup> North, *Of Building*, p.131.

Wanstead III (1725): Plates nos. 39-40, Elevation

The final elevated design for Wanstead dates from 1721, and was published in the third volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1725 (fig. 3). Like Wanstead II, this design depicts the house largely as it was constructed, with the exception of the ‘the new towers which I design’d’, similar to those which Campbell went on to create for Houghton Hall in Norfolk in 1729 (fig. 71).<sup>105</sup>

There does, however, seem to have been some confusion about the design amongst contemporaries. In 1722, Macky described the ‘spacious area’ between the basin and the house; ‘on each side of which the offices are to be built; the foundations of them are not yet laid’.<sup>106</sup> In 1728, Foucheroux also commented that additional buildings were to be added, flanking the sides of the central court, ‘le corps de logis du Cote de la Cour qui n’est pas encore finie’.<sup>107</sup> This implies that the additions were to be made in the form of wings flanking the area described, rather than towers as at Houghton. It is therefore possible that Campbell’s proposal to erect towers was superseded by the idea of building wings to create an even more impressive building. John Rocque’s 1735 map of Wanstead and one of the anonymous views, once attributed to Charles Catton the Elder, do indeed depict ‘wings’ flanking either side of the house (figs 21 and 22).

Later commentary on Wanstead, such as that by Peter Muilman in 1771, however, indicates that the design was never implemented; ‘what a building this would be, were the wings added, raised with colonnades answering to the grandeur of the

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<sup>105</sup> C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Vol.3 (London, 1725), p.8.

<sup>106</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.20.

<sup>107</sup> Foucheroux, *Voyage D’Angleterre*, p.105.

front'.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, there is no archaeological evidence to indicate that any extensions were constructed on the site.<sup>109</sup> The views by Rocque and the anonymous artist are therefore likely to have been produced when the wings were still anticipated. Due to insufficient funds, or perhaps a practical realisation that Wanstead House was of a sufficient size without them, this design was never executed.

Despite this, the overall idea of creating additional space at Wanstead is significant. It is not clear what the towers or wings would have been used for, had they been constructed. Macky says that the space was to be used for offices, but Campbell's description for Wanstead II states that those were located on the rustic level, just as the 1795 inventory later describes.<sup>110</sup> It therefore seems unlikely that the additional parts of the building would have been intended to accommodate office space.

Arthur Marks has proposed that the additional towers of Wanstead III were designed to accommodate 'a ballroom and a congruent space.'<sup>111</sup> In 1718, Richard Child had been elevated to Viscount Castlemaine, and it is possible that the demands of his new status encouraged him to contemplate modifications to the design of the house, in order to accommodate anticipated high levels of hospitality and sociability. Campbell's second and enlarged design for Wanstead

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<sup>108</sup> P. Muilman, *A New and Complete History of Essex*, 6 vols (Chelmsford, 1771), IV, p.130.

<sup>109</sup> Thanks to Compass Archaeology and Dr Rob Wiseman for sharing their archaeological findings with me.

<sup>110</sup> NA, C 111/215.

<sup>111</sup> A. Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House by William Hogarth', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol.77, No. 332 (Spring 1981), p.4.

shows both ends of the house divided into three with the largest room located in the middle. The middle room at the northern end is labelled as the chapel and that at the southern end of the house is the library. There is no evidence here of a space suitable for large-scale entertaining.

Macky's description of the house in 1722, however, indicates that the layout in this design was only partially implemented. At the northern end of the house, Macky does refer to a chapel, but at the southern end he instead describes a long gallery. This was later used as the setting for Hogarth's conversation piece, *An Assembly at Wanstead House*, begun in 1728 and completed in 1730 (fig. 6). This suggests that plans for a library and two smaller front and rear rooms in the southern end of the house were altered before building was completed in order to accommodate large scale entertaining. It therefore seems unlikely that Marks was correct about the idea for a ballroom in the towers, as additional space had been created by the time the third volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* came out. It is therefore possible that this elevation featured in this volume of the publication primarily to further demonstrate Campbell's architectural abilities and ideas.

### **Wanstead House: A Synthesis of Styles**

The classical facade of Wanstead House has long been taken as a key example of eighteenth-century English Palladianism.<sup>112</sup> But, although Wanstead was

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<sup>112</sup> See: Harris, *Palladians*, pp.62-63. Harris describes Wanstead as a model not only for the 'great house' but in reduced form, for the Palladian villa with wings. Giles Worsley also frequently refers to Wanstead House as a Palladian house throughout *Classical Architecture in Britain*. Summerson describes the designs for Wanstead to have been treated in 'the Palladian manner' and states that Campbell must also be credited for inventing what is loosely termed the 'Palladian House'. It is Summerson's description of these designs as 'loosely' Palladian which is important

described as ‘a fine [a] piece of architecture as any in Italy’, it is crucial to recognise that, like its landscape, the house in fact reveals various influences.

<sup>113</sup>Indeed, T.P Connor has noted that Campbell’s earliest designs and buildings reveal a stylistic uncertainty.<sup>114</sup> This is arguably confirmed in the various designs he proposed for Wanstead. As a result, the Palladian ‘label’ for the house is problematic. Certainly, the façade was classical in style, but, as outlined above, its interior included numerous baroque features, and its enfilade layout of rooms was very different from the arrangements in the Palladian designs imitated by Campbell for Chiswick House (1729) and Mereworth Hall (c.1720-25).<sup>115</sup>

The increasing popularity of the Grand Tour during the eighteenth century had a major impact on how estate owners wanted to rebuild their country houses.<sup>116</sup>

Holkham Hall, for example, consisted of numerous features taken directly from Palladio’s buildings in Italy. I noted earlier that, contrary to what might be expected, Richard Child is not recorded as having undertaken a Grand Tour. Furthermore, the minimal collection of architectural publications in his library at

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to keep in mind when discussing the designs for Wanstead House. See: Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, pp.200-201.

<sup>113</sup> Ambulator or Pocket Companion in a Tour round London (1794), p. 288.

<sup>114</sup> T.P Connor, ‘The Making of ‘Vitruvius Britannicus’, *Architectural History*, Vol. 20 (1977), pp.14-30, 81.

<sup>115</sup> Campbell’s interest in designing villas does not become prominent until volume 3 of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1725). For further discussion see: Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain*, p.106.

<sup>116</sup> See: Ingamells, *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers*; Wilton and Bignamini, *Grand Tour*; Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*. See Wilson and Mackley’s discussion of the construction of Holkham Hall and the influence of the Earl of Coke’s Grand Tour upon the design of Holkham, see pp.70-72; S. Parissien, *Palladian Style* (London, 1994); R.Wittkower, *Palladio and English Palladianism* (London, 1974).

Wanstead suggests that he had limited interest in the subject.<sup>117</sup> Although his collection of statues in the landscape indicates that he was aware of contemporary taste in classical subjects, he surely lacked the necessary architectural knowledge or interest to direct Campbell to build a house in a specific, classical style.

In a petition made to George I circa 1715, Campbell stated that he had ‘studied Architecture here and abroad for several years’, thus suggesting that he had, by this date, undertaken a Grand Tour.<sup>118</sup> Campbell also seems to have been associated in some way with the Scottish architect, James Smith (c.1655-1731).<sup>119</sup> Campbell appears to have been familiar with a collection of architectural drawings belonging to Smith, depicting classical Italian architecture, some of which were produced by Smith himself, and some of which were acquired during his stay in Rome during the 1660s or 1670s. By the time he returned to Edinburgh from this visit, Smith had acquired a first-hand knowledge of Italian buildings. Colvin significantly comments; ‘just as Campbell’s Palladianism preceded Burlington’s, so Smith’s Palladianism preceded Campbell’s...if so it is to James

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<sup>117</sup> Ingamells notes a reference made to a Richard Tylney, at Padua University in 1731, but this seems unlikely to be Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney, as he would have been too old to travel on the Grand Tour in 1731. The memoirs of Cassandra Willoughby, Richard’s stepsister, provide no hint of a Grand Tour education in the family, but rather seems to imply that the Child children were educated at home under the supervision of a tutor. See: R. O’Day ed., *Cassandra Brydges (1670-1735) First Duchess of Chandos Life and Letters* (Woodbridge, 2007),

<sup>118</sup> Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*, p.209. The visitors’ book at the University of Padua listed a Colen Campbell in 1697, although Colvin states that this is not likely to have been the same Campbell, he maintains he was still likely to have travelled on the Grand Tour based on the petition to King George I.

<sup>119</sup> For Smith see: Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*, pp.755-758; J. Macaulay, ‘Smith, James (1644/5–1731)’, ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63118](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63118), accessed 7 October 2015.

Smith's Italian travels that the origins of British Palladianism must ultimately be traced'.<sup>120</sup>

Smith's designs were clearly influential for Campbell, although it is not clear whether Campbell was merely familiar with these drawings as a pupil of Smith's, or whether he actually purchased them when Smith was facing financial difficulties. Nonetheless, it is his association with Smith which indicates exposure to classical and possibly Palladian ideas, prior to his employment at Wanstead. However, considering that Wanstead was Campbell's second commission, it is of little surprise that these architectural ideas were not yet fully formulated and that as a result, the building rather represents a synthesis of styles.

The most distinctive classical feature of Wanstead House was its central body, designed as a temple. Campbell described the hexastyle portico, which extended the entire width of the house, as 'the first yet practiced in this manner in the Kingdom'.<sup>121</sup> According to Summerson, no previous English house had displayed such spectacular loyalty to Rome.<sup>122</sup> Other classical features were the Venetian windows, included in the second and third designs (figs 2 and 3). These plates depict the windows in an alternating sequence much like those Palladio had designed for the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza (fig. 72). Steven Parissien describes the use of Venetian windows in England as differing notably from Italian custom.<sup>123</sup> Solitary Venetian windows set into stone walls such as those at

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<sup>120</sup> Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*, p.756

<sup>121</sup> Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, p.4.

<sup>122</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.322.

<sup>123</sup> Parissien, *Palladian Style*, p.90.

Houghton, for example, were not a feature ever applied by Palladio.<sup>124</sup> This is, therefore, one of a number of Palladian features which was reconfigured in English architecture.

While the first design for Wanstead is undeniably classical in its appearance, the second design adopts baroque features. This is most notable in the dome above the portico. The proposal to add this feature to the centre of Wanstead recalls the design of Vanbrugh's Castle Howard, completed in 1712 (fig. 65). However, this design was never realised at Wanstead, possibly because it seemed clumsy mounted upon the elegant *piano nobile*. Nonetheless, its inclusion in the second design demonstrates that Campbell experimented with a range of potential architectural features.

It is thus too problematic, and too restrictive, to identify Wanstead with one specific architectural style. The house should not be taken as representative of a single architectural movement, but rather as the product of a conjunction of idioms present in England at the turn of the century. Vanbrugh's baroque country houses, such as Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace, completed in the early eighteenth century, unsurprisingly influenced Wanstead's design (figs 65 and 73). Few classical, Palladian country houses had yet been built in England and so, aside from observations made in Italy or from Smith's collection of drawings, there was a limited amount in the way of classical architecture for Campbell to draw upon.

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<sup>124</sup> Wittkower, *Palladio and English Palladianism*, p.160.



There is a general consensus amongst architectural historians that the Palladian movement did not fully take hold in England until Lord Burlington returned from his Grand Tour in 1719. According to his biographer, Pamela Denman Kingsbury, Burlington had made it his goal to place England ‘within the mainstream of classical tradition’, proving that England could produce architecture of equal splendour as that of Rome.<sup>125</sup> Although buildings such as Peckwater Quadrangle in Oxford and William Benson’s Wilbury Manor are often identified as the earliest examples of neo-Palladianism in England, it was not until buildings such as Burlington’s Chiswick (which Campbell began to rebuild in a classical manner in 1720) that these ideas really came into play. Thus the construction of Wanstead predates Burlington’s active championing of the movement, causing further difficulties with labelling this house ‘Palladian’. Crucially, Harris has pointed out that, if anything, Wanstead signals the *beginning* of the Palladian revival.<sup>126</sup> This is arguably how Wanstead is best understood; as a house which marked the onset of the Palladian movement in England, rather than as a Palladian building in its own right.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> For Burlington see: P. Denman Kingsbury, ‘Boyle, Richard, third Earl of Burlington and fourth Earl of Cork (1694–1753)’, ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3136](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3136), accessed 17 October 2014.

<sup>126</sup> Harris, *Palladians*, p.16.

<sup>127</sup> I am grateful to Steven Parissien for a discussion regarding the Palladian movement. Parissien suggests that the term ‘Palladian’ did not come into use until the 19<sup>th</sup> or even 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Burlington and his followers were keen to celebrate Inigo Jones rather than an Italian Catholic. It is therefore unlikely that the term ‘Palladian’ would have been in use in the first half of the eighteenth century.

### **Influence of Wanstead on later architecture**

George Vertue described Wanstead as one of Campbell's greatest designs and, in addition to its widespread popularity, its design was highly influential on subsequent country houses.<sup>128</sup> Evidence of this can be seen in buildings such as Houghton Hall (1722) (fig. 71), Kedleston Hall (1726) (fig. 74), Nostell Priory (c.1737) (fig. 75), Prior Park (1735) (fig. 76) and most notably, Wentworth Woodhouse (c.1725-34) (fig. 77). All of these imitated the use of a central temple piano nobile supported by six Corinthian columns (with the exception of Nostell Priory, where the columns are set into the facade). Wentworth Woodhouse is arguably the closest imitation of Wanstead House. Unlike Wanstead however, Wentworth features additional wings that extend from the central block. These differ from the proposed wings depicted in some views of Wanstead, but it nonetheless gives a sense of the increased sense of scale and grandeur that could be achieved with such an addition. Other examples of architectural features taken from the Wanstead designs are evident at Houghton Hall, where the proposed towers of Wanstead III were constructed.

Three factors are likely to have contributed to the spread of Wanstead's influence. Firstly, the classical features which the house introduced coincided with ideas expressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Shaftsbury's widely read *Letter concerning the Art, or Science of Design*, in 1712. In this, Shaftsbury criticises the state of architecture at the time;

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<sup>128</sup> G. Vertue, *The works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford: Anecdotes of painting [and the other fine arts]*, 5 vols (London, 1798), III, p.435

‘tis no wonder if so many noble Designs of this kind have miscarry’d amongst us; since the Genius of our nation has hitherto been so little turn’d this way, that thro’ several Reigns we have patiently seen the noblest publick buildings Perish (if I may say so) under the hand of one single court architect.<sup>129</sup>

The ‘one single court architect’ to whom Shaftsbury refers is Sir Christopher Wren. The association of Wren’s baroque style with the Stuart court had arguably helped it to fall out of favour, in light of the new political structure of early eighteenth-century Britain. Although Wanstead was not entirely a Palladian design, its classical facade did appeal to those eager to adopt such ideals once Lord Burlington had promoted the Palladian movement. Finally, Summerson states that the simplicity of Wanstead’s design meant that much of the building’s influence lay in the fact that such splendour ‘required no inordinate skill to imitate’.<sup>130</sup>

The second factor likely to have contributed to Wanstead’s influence was its proximity to London. This was crucial to Wanstead’s success, enabling visitors to travel easily from the capital and to see the architectural structure for themselves.<sup>131</sup> The site’s popularity was no doubt enhanced once roads and transport were improved, making domestic tourism a far easier and more popular undertaking. In 1781, the Reverend Stebbing Shaw commented on how fortunate he and his friends were to arrive on a Saturday, the day Wanstead was open to

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<sup>129</sup> Shaftsbury, A. Cooper. ‘Letter concerning design’, *Characteristicks of men, manners, opinions, times*, 3 vols, (London, 1732), III, p.400.

<sup>130</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.201

<sup>131</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.201.

visitors.<sup>132</sup> This suggests that Wanstead had to enforce some rules of visiting in order to cope with numbers by this date, highlighting its popularity. The high levels of visitors encouraged widespread enthusiasm for Wanstead's architectural beauty. A printed view by George Robertson, published in 1781, depicts two male figures in discussion whilst drawing the house (figs 78a and 78b). This is indicative of the interest surrounding Wanstead and at least suggests how tourists might have studied the design whilst visiting the estate.

The third factor to contribute to the spread of Wanstead's influence was the publication of *Vitruvius Britannicus*. Both Summerson and Harris state that Wanstead was highly influential as a design on paper.<sup>133</sup> The three elevations, floor plans and section, designed by Campbell and included in the publication, were likely to have been distributed in print shops across the country given Mortimer and Dunoyer's involvement in the publication. *Vitruvius Britannicus* has sometimes been understood as a platform for Campbell's self-promotion and an architectural programme based on his own brand of Palladianism, but it is important to note that the number of his designs included in the publication increased gradually over time, suggesting that this was not an initial aim.<sup>134</sup> The publication of this text, however, did mean that the designs for Wanstead reached a considerable audience, supporting the idea that it helped to sow the seeds of what was later to be defined as the neo-Palladian movement.

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<sup>132</sup> Rev. S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England in 1788* (London, 1788), p.29.

<sup>133</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p.201; Harris, *Palladians*, p.62.

<sup>134</sup> L.E Rumble, 'Of good use or serious pleasure: Vitruvius Britannicus and early eighteenth century architectural discourse' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2001), p.27.

When Defoe visited Wanstead in 1724, he described the house as ‘all of Portland stone in the front, which makes it look extremely glorious and magnificent at a distance’.<sup>135</sup> When Shaw visited Wanstead in 1788, he commented on the approach to the house: ‘As you draw near, its beauties become more distinct, and the stile of architecture more striking; the whole is of Portland stone, and is esteemed, with justice, one of the most beautiful and magnificent private houses in Europe.’<sup>136</sup> According to Shaw, none of the houses which had imitated Wanstead’s design were quite as impressive: ‘Mr Colin Campbell was the architect who, by the execution of this noble structure, has given hints to succeeding artists, but has never been rivalled by any imitations.’<sup>137</sup>

The completion of Colen Campbell’s house was a pivotal moment in Wanstead’s history. The Elizabethan Wanstead manor, once belonging to the Earl of Leicester, had now been transformed. As a result, Richard Child had exceeded expectations of the newly moneyed elite. He had not only imitated other great houses, but been bold enough to adopt architectural features not yet fully realised in England. His efforts to continue his father’s landscape and rebuild Wanstead House can be perceived as attempts to justify his wealthy inheritance and further secure the Child family’s newly acquired status. Commissioning an impressive house was one means of achieving status and attracting public interest; but this house also had to be furnished, managed, maintained and to comply with on-

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<sup>135</sup> Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.41.

<sup>136</sup> Muilman, *New and Complete History of Essex*, p.228; Shaw, *Tour to the West of England*, p.28.

<sup>137</sup> Shaw, *Tour to the West of England*, p.28.

going trends if it was to be perceived as one of the great country houses of eighteenth-century England.

## Chapter Three: 1720–1750

### Richard Child, Viscount Castlemaine and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney: II

#### Introduction

On his visit to Wanstead in 1722, John Macky described the newly completed interior as consisting of four apartments, laid out on two storeys, with two facing west and two facing east.<sup>1</sup> He notes that the ground floor, also known as the rustic level, belonged to the family while the upper storey accommodated the rooms of state. Beginning with an account of the rustic level, Macky takes the reader on a tour of one of the front-facing apartments which includes a number of impressive and notable furnishings, such as marble tables, gold and blue brocade, velvet brocaded chairs, Chinoiserie papers and family portraits.<sup>2</sup> He describes the other front facing apartment as ‘finished but not yet furnished’.<sup>3</sup> The apartment facing east, overlooking the rear gardens, is ‘designed for the entertainment of friends’.<sup>4</sup> It includes a parlour (in which hang several family portraits), an anti-chamber (with chintz), and a bedchamber, dressing room and closet ‘neatly furnished with the same’.<sup>5</sup> Having completed his tour of the ground level, Macky proceeds up the external staircase, passing through the portico to enter the great hall. Significantly, Macky comments that the hall and the adjoining saloon are ‘both to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Macky, *A Journey through England. In familiar letters. From a gentleman here, to his friend abroad* (London, 1722), p.21.

<sup>2</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.21.

<sup>3</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

<sup>4</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

<sup>5</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

be finely painted'.<sup>6</sup> Macky's description thus indicates that, although construction of the house was complete in 1722, it was only partially furnished by this date.

Little is known about how Wanstead manor had been furnished by Josiah Child during the late seventeenth century, but it is likely that those furnishings were unsuitable for the new, classical Wanstead House. In addition, Macky's descriptions are of furnishings fashionable in the early 1720s, indicating that an entirely new scheme was being developed. Although it was common for families to hold on to older furniture of significance, to emphasise their lineage at a country house, Wanstead was a recent acquisition and, in the absence of significant heirlooms, new and impressive pieces were required. Richard Child was therefore faced with the all-important task of ensuring that he introduced furnishings that would equal Wanstead's new, glistening façade.

In addition, Wanstead's proximity to London must also have encouraged its owner to ensure that the interior furnishings met with, and even exceeded public expectations of how such a residence should be presented. Contemporaries who visited Richard at his London townhouse could see 'Rich and Genuine Household Furniture'.<sup>7</sup> Following his death in 1750, the *London Daily Advertiser* advertised a sale of the contents of his house in Soho Square, describing luxurious furnishings of genoa, damask, mohair, coffy, broccadillo, magnificent pier glasses, marble tables on gilt frames, Japanese cabinets and impressive Persian, Turkey and Wilton carpets.<sup>8</sup> Whilst it is important to recognise that this

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<sup>6</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> *London Daily Advertiser & Literary Gazette*, 22 October 1751.

<sup>8</sup> *London Daily Advertiser & Literary Gazette*, 22 October 1751.



description postdates the period under discussion, it nonetheless provides a tantalising hint at the kind of magnificent furnishings that Child liked, and was capable of purchasing.

In addition to furnishing, a second phase of landscape improvements was also carried out during this period. This is likely to have been because trends in landscape design were already shifting by the time Wanstead House was completed. The taste for the kind of rigid, geometric gardens to be seen at Wanstead was waning. The relationship between house and landscape was of great importance for contemporaries. In his designs for Wanstead, Campbell commented upon the need for the state apartments to be elevated in order to provide a view of the ‘excellent gardens’.<sup>9</sup> But this was no good if the windows looked out onto an old-fashioned landscape.

This chapter will therefore address the furnishings that were introduced to the Wanstead interior, and evaluate the implications behind such designs. It will then go on to discuss the landscape improvements made between 1720 and 1750, as a response to both the newly built Wanstead House, and to changing trends in landscape design during the first half of the eighteenth century. Throughout this chapter, it is important to bear in mind the significant new titles received by Child during this period. In 1718, Child was elevated to the title of Viscount Castlemaine and, in 1731, to that of 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney. (I will, however, continue to refer to him as ‘Richard Child’ in my discussion, for purposes of clarity).

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<sup>9</sup> C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 3 vols (London, 1715), I, p.4.

## **Furnishing Wanstead House**

The process of building and furnishing a country house was typically a lengthy task, which could take decades to complete. Holkham Hall, for example, took thirty years to build and, as Wilson and Mackley noted, involved ‘four minds in its design and construction’.<sup>10</sup> My discussion of the interior at Wanstead will span a thirty-year period, from William Kent’s first employment at the house, through to Child’s death in 1750.

There are a number of sources available for reconstructing the Wanstead interior, helping us to identify when various features were introduced, and to explore their reception. These include the plans and section designed by Campbell (1715-1717) published in *Vitruvius Britannicus* (figs 1-3 and 70), William Hogarth’s *Assembly at Wanstead House* (1728-1730) (fig. 6), Joseph Frans Nollekens’s *Lord Tylney and His Family and Friends at Wanstead House, Essex* (1740) (fig. 19), contemporary visitor accounts, surviving furniture, a household inventory dating from 1795, and the June and September 1822 sale catalogues.

Wanstead House consisted of thirty-five rooms, but my account of the interior will focus on three located on the principal floor: the great hall; the ballroom; and the saloon. This is because the best evidence survives for these spaces, as the most public and elaborately designed, and therefore the most commented upon.

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<sup>10</sup> See: A. Mackley and R. Wilson, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (London, 2000), p.72: ‘Its designs (building began as late as 1734) are difficult to disentangle, for no fewer than four minds were involved in its design and construction: William Kent, his patron, Lord Burlington, by this time the supreme arbiter of Palladianism in England; the earl himself; and his Norwich-born clerk of works, Matthew Brettingham – who at the end of his life claimed most of the credit or himself’.

Like the eighteenth-century visitor, the Wanstead historian is largely confined to exploring the most opulent and public-facing rooms in the house. Thus, in some ways, the limitations of the evidence speak to the original aims of the building by providing, predominantly, insight into the most impressive spaces.

Campbell's contribution to the Wanstead exterior was recognised by the inclusion of his portrait in a frieze in the portico, now displayed at Compton Place in Eastbourne (fig. 79).<sup>11</sup> In 1819, travel writer James Dugdale commented on this likeness, and Campbell's role in creating the house;

over the door leading into the great hall, is a medallion of Colin Campbell, the architect; who acquired great reputation from the science and judgement displayed by him, in the construction of this edifice.<sup>12</sup>

Campbell's contribution to the interior, however, is somewhat uncertain, and surely limited. Arthur Marks's discussion of Hogarth's conversation piece attributes the doorframes depicted in the ballroom to Campbell. The image of the leaning putti seen over the doorframe was indeed a motif often used by Campbell, uncommon amongst other architects of the period (fig. 80).<sup>13</sup> However, aside from these features, the overall interior at Wanstead was overseen by the leading designer of the Georgian period, William Kent (c.1685 – 1748).

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<sup>11</sup> J. Dugdale, *The New British Traveller* (1819), p.410.

<sup>12</sup> Dugdale, *New British Traveller*, p.410.

<sup>13</sup> A. Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House by William Hogarth', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol.77, No. 332 (Spring 1981), p.8; H. Stutchbury, *The Architecture of Colen Campbell* (Manchester, 1967), p.29. Stutchbury notes that this feature can also be observed at other houses designed by Campbell such as in the Burlington House Saloon, Houghton's Stone Hall, Mereworth's Gallery and the saloon at Hackney House.

Evidence of Kent's furnishings is abundant in the sources I will use, such as contemporary descriptions, the surviving furniture and the paintings, particularly Hogarth's conversation piece. Furthermore, Robins's June 1822 sale catalogue supports the general attribution of the interior to Kent, as it describes a painting by William Aikman which hung in the great hall as 'a portrait of Kent, the artist who painted many of the ceilings & gave designs for the interior decorations of Wanstead House' (fig. 81).<sup>14</sup>

John Harris comments that there is a problematic lack of documentation surrounding Kent's commissions after he had returned from Italy in 1719; in particular for his work at Burlington House, Cannons and Wanstead.<sup>15</sup> However, there is some material available for his work on Wanstead, although it is difficult to establish accurately the year in which he started there. Drawing on the evidence of Aikman's portrait of Kent, it seems likely that the commission took place some time between 1719, when Lord Burlington took Kent into his residence at Burlington House, and 1725, when George Vertue commented on the portrait: 'Mr. Kent his picture at length done by Mr Eckman & plac'd up in hall of my Lord Castlemaines in Essex, where he has painted much for his Lordship.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Wanstead House, Essex. Magnificent Furniture, Collection of Fine Paintings and Sculpture, Massive Silver and Gilt Plate, Splendid Library of Choice Books, The Valuable Cellars of Fine-Flavoured Old Wines, Ales, &c., &c.* (London, 1822), day 10, lot 365. Hereafter *Wanstead House Sale*.

<sup>15</sup> J. Harris, 'Architectural and Ornamental Draftsman' in *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain*, ed. S. Weber (London and New Haven, 2013), p.151.

<sup>16</sup> G. Vertue, 'Notebooks', *The Walpole Society*, 77 vols (Oxford, 1934), XVII, p.24.

Rosalind K. Marshall states that Aikman arrived in London from Edinburgh in 1722.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, his portrait of Kent must have been produced between 1722 and 1725, either shortly after Kent's completion of the ceiling paintings, or while he was carrying out the work. Aikman's portrait shows him full length, holding thick paintbrushes like those he presumably used for the ceiling paintings at Wanstead - the first work he carried out for Child. Macky does not comment on these ceiling paintings during his visit in 1722, but, in a letter written by Kent on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1720 to Burrell Massingberd, one of his patrons on the Grand Tour, he notes: 'I am at present upon ye greatest works in England. Lord Burlington's Ld Duck Shandoe's & Lord Castellmaine's, until I have fix'd this work a little I am afraid shall not be {?} at liberty to come into ye north.'<sup>18</sup> This indicates that work on the ceiling paintings had begun by 1720 and was either still in progress in 1722, or was simply overlooked by Macky.

It is not clear how Child and Kent met, but it seems probable that the Wanstead commission came about thanks to Kent's key patron, Lord Burlington. It is likely that Child socialised with the pair when residing at his London town house in nearby Covent Garden, which he began renting in 1717.<sup>19</sup> Sources indicate that,

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<sup>17</sup> See R. K. Marshall's notes in the William Kent file at the National Portrait Gallery, Heinz Archive; See also: R. K Marshall, 'Aikman, William, of Cairnie (1682–1731)', Oxford Dictionary National Biography, [www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/232?docPos=2](http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/232?docPos=2), accessed 15 October 2014. Hereafter ODNB.

<sup>18</sup> Kent to Massingberd, June 3, 1720, in C. Blackett-Ord ed., 'Letters from William Kent to Burrell Massingberd from the Continent, 1712-1719', *Walpole Society Annual*, Vol. 63 (2001), p.109.

<sup>19</sup> London Metropolitan Archives E/BER/CG/T/II/C/06, Bedford House in Covent Garden and Buildings on the ground (Long leases to successive lessees, and in 1717 to Sir Richard Child in trust for the Duchess of Bedford) 1701–1717. Hereafter LMA.

following Kent and Burlington's encounter on the Grand Tour, the artist was invited to stay at his patron's town house in 1719, and to paint the ceilings there in a fashion similar to Raphael, whose work Kent had studied intensively during his time abroad. Burlington's patronage clearly led to connections with numerous other Whig gentlemen, probably including Richard Child, who, by 1719, had converted from Tory to that party.

Child's employment of Kent may, alternatively or also, have been due to a familial tie. As stated in his letter to Massingberd in 1720, Kent was employed by Duke of Chandos at Canons, Middlesex to produce ceiling paintings. James Brydges, the Duke of Chandos, was married to Child's step-sister, Cassandra, and the connection may underpin Kent's employment at both houses at around the same time to carry out similar work. It is unclear, however, who commissioned Kent first. Significantly, both these commissions occupied Kent after his work at Burlington House and before his employment at Kensington Palace in 1722.

Thus, following the completion of the architectural fabric of Wanstead House, Campbell appears to have been replaced by Kent as Child's key designer. Campbell's replacement could have been due to significant events in 1719, when he was removed from his post as Deputy to the Surveyor of Works. A year earlier, William Benson had replaced Christopher Wren as Surveyor, and had appointed Campbell as his deputy. The post was, however, short lived. In 1719, the two men falsely claimed that parliament was in danger of collapsing, so that they might replace it with a new classical structure of their own design. Once the House of

Lords discovered the lie, both Benson and Campbell were promptly dismissed.<sup>20</sup> Whilst there is no evidence to establish Child's views on the scandal, it is arguable that these events, which led to Campbell falling out of favour with George I, meant he was no longer deemed to be an appropriate choice of architect to be associated with Wanstead.

The Wanstead commission dates from early in Kent's career. The designs for the ceiling paintings there were notably similar to those already executed at Burlington House in 1719, and those painted later at Kensington Palace and Houghton Hall (figs 82 and 83). They were typical of Kent's style. His interiors at Cannons (demolished 1747), where Child's step-sister lived, and at Burlington House in London were likely to have been familiar to Child. When discussing the designer's career, Vertue states that, through Kent's relationship with Burlington; 'he has such an ascendant in many noble Families, that his word was the Law. His opinion paramount.'<sup>21</sup> Although Child perhaps had little input into the interior scheme once Kent was working at Wanstead, the fact that he chose to employ him indicates that he was keen to sign up to the Kentian 'design package'. Whilst he presumably did not direct Kent in the specific furnishing of each room, he demonstrated his personal taste by opting for the idiom in which he specialised.

### The Great Hall

In 1722, Macky described the ascent to the great hall from the basement: 'There is also from this lobby a Back-stairs of Stone, balustraded with iron, which leads

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<sup>20</sup> J. Sambrook, 'Benson, William (*bap.* 1682, *d.* 1754)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/2147?docPos=2](http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/2147?docPos=2), accessed 13 June 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Vertue, 'Notebooks', LXXII, p.139.

you up to the apartments above.’<sup>22</sup> If we imagine ourselves as an eighteenth-century visitor like Macky, the first point of arrival into the principal floor of Wanstead House would have been the great hall. In addition, Campbell’s section of the great hall and saloon in volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus* provides the earliest view of the Wanstead interior available, and is thus an appropriate starting point for this account (fig. 70). Unlike the ballroom and the saloon, there is unfortunately no painted record of this space. Instead, evidence has to be added from other sources, in order to recreate its appearance. My discussion will focus on those items of furniture listed in the hall in the Wanstead 1822 sale catalogue, which seem most likely also to have been situated there during Richard Child’s lifetime. Macky’s account provides little detail on the great hall, other than it is ‘to be finely painted’.<sup>23</sup> However, the collection of Kent furniture, paintings and sculpture recorded in both the June sale catalogue and the 1795 inventory show that it was to become a particularly impressive and noteworthy space in the house.

The furnishing of the hall began with Kent’s ceiling painting of *The Times of Day*, commissioned by Child around 1720. Given the importance of this space as an entry point into the principal floor, it seems likely that this was the first of the several ceiling paintings to be executed by Kent. Contemporary descriptions of the great hall frequently refer to it; ‘the ceiling is richly gilt and painted by Kent’.<sup>24</sup> Although there is no visual record of its appearance, other ceiling paintings by the artist provides some indication of how it may have appeared (figs

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<sup>22</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

<sup>23</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.23.

<sup>24</sup> S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England* (London, 1788), p.29.



82 and 83).<sup>25</sup> The ceilings at Kensington and Houghton feature an oval central panel surrounded by a gold gilt frame and decorative gold gilt cornices flanked by figures. These examples indicate the style practised by Kent during this period. Hannah Greig has proposed that the ceiling in the ballroom depicted in Hogarth's *An Assembly at Wanstead House* was, in fact, that of the great hall (fig. 6).<sup>26</sup> Richard Dormont, however, rightly comments that the ceiling in Hogarth's portrait depicts an Olympian scene, and so it is unlikely to represent *The Times of Day*.<sup>27</sup>

The next feature to be introduced into the great hall was a selection of hall furniture, designed by Kent (fig. 84). According to John Cornforth, specially designed hall furniture only began to be introduced in the mid-1720s.<sup>28</sup> The devising of this furniture emphasises the expansion of sociable activity at this time, and the increasing need to facilitate visiting. Susan Weber states that, because important visitors would not be kept waiting in the hall for long periods of time, these items of furniture would have been largely used by servants and tradesmen.<sup>29</sup> Regardless, the seating in the hall would be amongst the first items which visitors would encounter, and it was therefore imperative that they were impressive and communicated the importance of the house, through their design

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, ceiling paintings at Houghton, Burlington and Kensington, all of which were executed following the Wanstead commission.

<sup>26</sup> H. Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century English Interiors in Image and Text' in *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, eds J. Aynsley and C. Grant (London, 2006), p.112. Greig however does not provide any supporting statement for this argument.

<sup>27</sup> R. Dormont, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia, 1986), p.160

<sup>28</sup> J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven and London, 2004), p.36.

<sup>29</sup> S. Weber, 'Kent and the Georgian Baroque Style in Furniture: Domestic Commissions', in Weber, *William Kent*, p.483.

and the use of fashionable materials such as mahogany and walnut.<sup>30</sup> Both the June and September 1822 sale catalogues refer to a number of wooden hall chairs. Lot 98 of the September sale was recorded as ‘8 stout mahogany frame hollow back Hall chairs.’<sup>31</sup> The June sale listed: ‘Four capital hollow shield-back wainscot-framed Hall Chairs, beautifully painted in flowers, and circular panel in front’ and most notably, ‘painted with arms, &c’.<sup>32</sup>

Another example of furnishings featuring the family coat of arms includes the two chandeliers in the great hall (fig. 85). The June sale catalogue provides the same description for both; ‘a MAGNIFICENT MASSIVE Chandelier, Exquisitely carved...surmounted by a superb Spread Eagle destroying a Snake on a rock’.<sup>33</sup> When Child acquired his peerage, the family coat of arms gained an eagle and snake motif.<sup>34</sup> The chandeliers and hall furniture were, therefore, amongst the furnishings produced in celebration of Child’s newly acquired peerage as Earl Tylney in 1731.

Daniel Defoe’s *The Complete English Tradesman* (1727) described members of the newly moneyed elite visiting the Herald’s Office, in search for the coat of

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<sup>30</sup> Weber, ‘Kent and the Georgian Baroque Style in Furniture’, pp.482-483.

<sup>31</sup> *A Catalogue of the superb Gobelin tapestry, beautiful damask and velvet hangings, and other articles, of the princely mansion, Wanstead house, deferred at the late sale, together with various uncleared lots* (London, 1822), day 1, lot 98; Weber, ‘Kent and the Georgian Baroque Style in Furniture’, p.483.

<sup>32</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 12, no.25, lots 28, 29, 30

<sup>33</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 12, no.25, lot 37.

<sup>34</sup> E. Kimber and J. Almon, *The Peerage of Ireland: A Genealogical and Historical Account and Historical Account of All the Peers of that Kingdom; Their Descents, Collateral Branches, Births, Marriages, and Issue*, 2 vols (London, 1768), I, p.58.

arms of their ancestors; ‘to paint them upon their coaches & engrave them upon their plate, embroider them upon their furniture, or carve them upon their pediments of their new houses’.<sup>35</sup> Defoe’s comments highlights that the acquisition of a coat of arms was integral in obtaining status; ‘if he could not find the ancient race of Gentleman from which he came, he would begin a new race, who should be as good Gentlemen as any that went before them’.<sup>36</sup> The prominent use of the coat of arms throughout the hall furnishings reveals how Richard Child was keen to communicate the family’s newly acquired wealth and status to visitors arriving at Wanstead. In addition, inserting the family crests onto furniture was an effective means of leaving his mark on the fabric of Wanstead, demonstrating optimism for a lengthy future at the house, and providing future heirs with a sense of pride in family longevity.<sup>37</sup>

As a room designed to impress new arrivals, it was important that notable works of art should be displayed in the great hall. Aside from Kent’s ceiling painting and the portrait by William Aikman, introduced in the 1720s, however, there seem to have been no other paintings there until around 1743. Then, the Italian artist, Andrea Casali, was commissioned to paint six historical subjects for Wanstead. Charlotte Fermour wrote to her mother, the Countess of Pomfret, giving a valuable account of her visit to Wanstead that year; ‘after supper we all danced to our own singing, in order to teach Signor Casali (an Italian they have in the

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<sup>35</sup> D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman in familiar letters, directing him in all the several parts and Progressions of Trade* (London, 1727), p.244.

<sup>36</sup> Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, p.244.

<sup>37</sup> J. Stobart, ‘Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1717-1819’, *Regional Furniture*, Vol. 27 (2013), pp.1-43.

house) English country dances'.<sup>38</sup> Fermour's letter indicates that Casali was resident at Wanstead whilst employed by Child, indicating that this was an important commission. Three of his paintings were hung in the hall: Coriolanus Beseeched by His Wife and Mother to Spare the City of Rome, *Pompey taking leave of his family* and Cloelia before Porsenna (figs 86 and 87).

All three of these works depict scenes from ancient Roman history. Coriolanus (believed to have lived during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC) and Pompey (106 BC –48 BC) were Roman military figures. Porsenna was an Etruscan King known for his war against the city of Rome circa 508 BC. The display of historical military subjects was typical in eighteenth-century country houses as a means of portraying the owner as an educated gentleman. Furthermore, Palladio's *Quattro Libri* stated that the hall was designed as a space to celebrate military triumph; 'entertain those who attend the Masters going forth to salute him and negotiate with him; and such places are the first part of the house that present themselves to those that would entertain therein'.<sup>39</sup> It was therefore fitting to display scenes of ancient military history in the great hall. Furthermore, because the elite Whig circle promoted ancient Roman political, philosophical and architectural ideals as the model for Georgian society to follow, the most prestigious art was considered to be that which emphasised the virtues of the ancient hero.<sup>40</sup> From 1743 onwards,

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<sup>38</sup> Redbridge Central Library, YW301, Charlotte Fermour to her mother, Countess of Pomfret, 13 October 1743. Hereafter RCL.

<sup>39</sup> A. Palladio, *The first book of architecture* (London, 1663), p.125.

<sup>40</sup> M. Myrone, *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (London, 2006), p.73.

many visitors to the house commented on this series of paintings, demonstrating that they remained noteworthy throughout the rest of the century.<sup>41</sup>

The sale catalogue for June 1822 claims that Casali had been brought over to England by Child:

The works of this excellent modern Italian Artist are but little known in this country; and from the number of his finest works which decorate this splendid Mansion, it is evident he was invited over from Italy by the Earl of Tilney for the express purpose of embellishing its walls.<sup>42</sup>

Casali's biographer, John Ingamells, however, argues that Casali did not arrive in England by way of Child's invitation, but in fact was encouraged to come by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carlisle and the director of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Sir Charles Frederick, whose portrait he painted in Rome in 1738.<sup>43</sup> Certainly, Vertue claimed that the artist had been invited to England by Carlisle, 'promising his interest & promotion to business'.<sup>44</sup>

Once in England, however, Casali soon found himself in demand by a noble clientele, many of whom he had met whilst they travelled on their Grand Tours.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See: P. Muilman, *A New and Complete History of Essex*, 6 vols (Chelmsford, 1771), IV, p.229; *The Ambulator, or, A Pocket Companion in a Tour round London* (London, 1794), p.288; Shaw, *Tour to the West of England*, p.29.

<sup>42</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot.228.

<sup>43</sup> J. Ingamells, 'Casali, Andrea (1705–1784)', ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/article/4849>, accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Vertue, 'Notebooks', LXXII, p.111.

<sup>45</sup> Ingamells, 'Casali, Andrea.'

His most substantial patrons were Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester (1697–1759), and Alderman William Beckford (1709-1770): two notable Whigs who are likely to have been known to Child.<sup>46</sup> In addition, in 1738, Casali had painted a portrait of Smart Lethieullier’s wife whilst the couple had been in Rome. Lethieullier was the son of a successful Turkey merchant and resident of Aldersbrook Manor in Essex, close to Wanstead. Ultimately, we cannot know whether one of these specific connections put Child in contact with Casali, or whether it was rather a matter of him broadly following other members of the Whig elite.

Other works of art displayed in the great hall included a notable collection of sculpture from Herculaneum. Although Campbell was little involved in the furnishing of Wanstead, the section and floor plans in volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus* give some suggestions for furnishing the space, including a number of niches set into the walls of the hall (figs 68-70). These were presumably designed to accommodate such sculptures, and/or urns. This follows Roger North’s recommendations for a hall, made in 1711; ‘if the house be of very great state, the vestibule is the first place within the door, which is not to be large, nor curious, but plaine and neat; and the ornaments most proper to it are niches, and statues’.<sup>47</sup>

Visitor accounts do not comment upon the sculptures until the second half of the eighteenth century. The earliest account is that by Muilman in 1771; ‘the ornaments consist chiefly of two large antique statues on marble pedestals, Livia

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<sup>46</sup> Ingamells, ‘Casali, Andrea.’

<sup>47</sup> R. North, *Of Building: Roger North’s Writings on Architecture*, eds H. Colvin and J. Newman (Oxford, 1981), p.131.

and Domitian' (fig. 88).<sup>48</sup> Livia (58BC-29AD) was the wife of the Roman Emperor Augustus and Domitian served as Emperor from 81-96 AD. The display of these powerful, historical figures alongside Casali's historical paintings was fitting, and would have reinforced the decorative scheme of the great hall. The 1822 June sale catalogue records lot 246 as 'Agrippina seated with her daughter standing beside her.'<sup>49</sup> Agrippina was the fourth wife of the Emperor Claudius and, like Livia and Domitian, was a significant and influential political figure of ancient Rome.

It is, however, difficult to ascertain whether these sculptures were acquired by Richard Child - or by his son, John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Tylney, who inherited the estate in 1751, and spent a significant amount of time living in Italy. Nonetheless, they are noteworthy features, which indicate that Campbell's implicit recommendations, made in his floor plan for and section of this room, were eventually met.

### The Ballroom

In 1781, Mrs Lybbe Powys described the experience of looking down the enfilade from the great hall; 'to look through the suite of apartments has a fine effect'.<sup>50</sup> Situated at the end of this enfilade was the ballroom, measuring seventy-five feet long, the entire width of the house, and described in 1771 as 'elegantly fitted up

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<sup>48</sup> Muilman, *New and Complete History*, p.228. These statues were purchased at the sale by the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire and are now on display at Chatsworth House.

<sup>49</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot 246.

<sup>50</sup> E.J Climenson ed., *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon., AD 1756 to 1808* (London, 1899), p.206.

with gilded ornaments of all kinds'.<sup>51</sup> In 1728, Hogarth was commissioned to produce his conversation piece of the Child family and their friends (fig. 6). Richard Dormont proposes that the painting was possibly commissioned to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Richard and his wife Dorothy.<sup>52</sup> The painting was one of Hogarth's earliest exercises in this sub-genre of portraiture.<sup>53</sup> Prior to this, he had primarily been an engraver; he had only started painting portraits following his marriage to Jane Thornhill in March 1729.

Hogarth's scene was set in what Macky refers to as 'the long gallery'.<sup>54</sup> This had replaced the library and the two smaller adjoining rooms illustrated in Campbell's floor plans for volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus*. Subsequent visitor accounts, the 1795 inventory and the 1822 sale catalogues however describe this room as the ballroom. It will therefore be addressed as the ballroom throughout this thesis.

It is unclear whether Campbell or Kent was responsible for introducing the ballroom. Records of Kent's ceiling paintings at the house indicate that he was employed there prior to Hogarth's commission in 1728, but there is no evidence to confirm that the architectural amendments were of his doing. In fact, his limited architectural experience at this date may instead indicate that it was Campbell's work. However, regardless of whose responsibility the conversion of the library into the ballroom was, the decision to include such a space is likely to have been prompted by Child's acquisition of the title of Viscount Castlemaine in

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<sup>51</sup> Muilman, *New and Complete History*, p.229.

<sup>52</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.157.

<sup>53</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.159; Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.3; W. Makepeace Thackeray, 'William Hogarth', *The Cornhill Magazine* (May 1860), pp.565-566.

<sup>54</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.23.



1718. Such an elevation of social status would have encouraged new expectations of sociability. Wanstead, significantly, was one the first houses in England to have a ballroom. Geoffrey Atwell refers to an event in 1731 which indicates that Child did use this space for entertaining large numbers of guests; ‘a grand Entertainment at his fine seat at Wanstead to his tenants and all the Parish of Wanstead, of both sexes, which were about 100 in number; and in the Evening was a Ball, which continued till Two the next Morning’.<sup>55</sup>

Much like the hall, the ballroom at Wanstead is likely to have undergone various alterations. However, Hogarth’s scene of the space, painted between 1728 and 1730, portrays a seemingly fully furnished room, suggesting that it could have been one of the first to be completed as an interior scheme. Alternatively, Hogarth’s view could be interpreted as a projection of how the interior was to appear, once the furnishing process was complete.<sup>56</sup> Hogarth’s portrait is of central importance in my discussion as the most informative source for the ballroom’s furnishings. In a similar manner to my account of the great hall, I will discuss particular features depicted by Hogarth individually in order to establish when each was introduced.

It is necessary, at the outset, however, to assess the relative reliability of Hogarth’s view. Marks, Dormont and Greig have regarded the conversation piece

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<sup>55</sup> G. Atwell, ‘Wanstead House’, *Essex Review*, Vol. LXIII (1954), p.71; Newham Archives, Hiram Stead Newspaper Cuttings Collection, p.30. Hereafter Stead.

<sup>56</sup> See: Dormont, *British Painting*, p.159. Dormont states that Child commissioned the portrait on August 28, 1729 and refers to the following document as evidence; British Library ADD. MS.,27 995 f.1, Hogarth’s Account taken January first 1731 of all ye Pictures that Remain unfinish’d.

of the Wanstead ballroom as a false and exaggerated representation.<sup>57</sup> The commissioning of Hogarth to paint a conversation piece set in the Wanstead interior has been described by Marks as an indication of Child's artistic naivety.<sup>58</sup> This is on the basis of possible hints within the painting of Hogarth's deep dislike for Kent, well known amongst contemporaries, ever since Kent had superseded Hogarth's father-in-law, James Thornhill, as royal painter. Hogarth also opposed Kent's tendency to look towards foreign and, in particular, Italian influence for artistic inspiration and, following Kent's death in 1748, Hogarth wrote that 'never was there a more wretched dauber'.<sup>59</sup> Marks argues that Hogarth painted the bust on the top right corner of the fireplace to resemble portraits of Kent such as that which hung in the great hall (fig. 90). Marks asks: 'What better way to show Kent than as a petrified representative of his own unwelcome innovations?'<sup>60</sup>

Hogarth also quite probably disliked Child, his wealthy, nouveau riche patron, who had a taste for the kind of luxury the artist was later to lampoon. The tapestry above Richard Child's head depicts a scene from *The Adventures of Telemachus*, in which the nymph, Calypso, is entertaining Telemachus, the son of Odysseus (fig. 91). This tapestry is a copy of a design by Bernard Van Orley, a sixteenth-century Flemish painter and designer of tapestries and stained glass. In Orley's design, a large silver urn can be seen in an upright position in the bottom left corner. However, in *An Assembly at Wanstead House*, this urn has been

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<sup>57</sup> Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century English Interiors in Image and Text', p.112; Dormont, *British Painting*, p.158; Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.9.

<sup>58</sup> Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.5.

<sup>59</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.159.

<sup>60</sup> Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.11.

repositioned by Hogarth so as to appear as if about to topple onto his patron's head (fig. 90).

Whilst the urn may well have been a joke, by and large, as will become apparent, Hogarth seems to have represented Kent's interior with a notable degree of veracity. He may have exaggerated the baroque details of the ballroom a little, but this may well have been the result of his attempt to recreate his impressions of the room when back in the studio, rather than a critique *per se* of the taste of his influential patron.<sup>61</sup> As in the case of any commissioned artist at the beginning of their painting career, it surely would not have been in Hogarth's interest to produce an overtly satirical representation of the Wanstead interior and its sitters. Further evidence that Hogarth was not painting a work with more than perhaps a subtle dig or two is provided by Vertue's comments of January 1730: 'The daily success of Mr Hogarth in painting small family pieces & Conversations with so much Air and agreeableness Causes him to be much followd and esteemed.'<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, as Dormont has pointed out, this painting was a commission for a private client, and was never engraved, so any blatant satire would have lacked a public audience.<sup>63</sup> At most, surely, this was a subtle critique for personal satisfaction.

As with the hall, the earliest feature to be introduced in the ballroom at Wanstead is likely to have been Kent's ceiling painting. Evidence of such a painting in this space, as well as in the great hall, demonstrates continuity in Kent's interior

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<sup>61</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.159.

<sup>62</sup> Vertue, 'Notebooks', XXII, p.40.

<sup>63</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.159.

design scheme. A gilt circular frame, much like those Kent created for Houghton Hall, surrounds it. Furthermore, like the ceiling of the King's Drawing room at Kensington, that in the Wanstead ballroom is coved, with a heavy gold decorative surround, and masks, figures and roundels in each of the corners (fig. 82).<sup>64</sup> The subject of the painting is described by Dormer as an Olympian scene, but the limited view in the Hogarth makes it difficult to establish specific details.

The next addition to the ballroom at Wanstead is likely to have been the furniture shown by Hogarth. The June sale catalogue and the inventory of Wanstead House made in 1795 both support the proposition that Hogarth's portrayal of this furniture is accurate. For example, the crimson covered sofa displayed in the 2014 exhibition, *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, alongside Hogarth's portrait, confirms the details of the piece of furniture on which Richard Child is seated, and its attribution to Kent (fig. 92). Descriptions of similar furnishings appear in the June sale catalogue. Lot 28 for example, is recorded as:

A SUMPTUOUS GRECIAN SCROLL BACK AND END SOFA, with thick hair squab, four down pillows, and two round bolsters, in costly crimson damask cases, edged with silk cord, and Turkish tassels at the corners, bows, &c. bordered with broad lace, on massive rich carved and gilt raffle-leaf scroll feet and French casters, and extra crimson-ground chints cases, lined white calico, 8 feet long.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> S. Brindle, 'Kent the Painter' in Weber, *William Kent*, p.117.

<sup>65</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, lot.28.

Another description is given under Lot 38: ‘AN ELEGANT SQUARE SETTEE, in a superb massive carved and gilt frame, with scroll elbows, the back stuffed in costly crimson Genoa velvet, and squab to correspond, on scroll legs, the frame ornamented with mermaids and festoons of flowers, and chints case, as before, 4 feet wide.’<sup>66</sup>

Lots 39 to 45 are described as ‘A Ditto’. Lot 46 is similarly described as ‘A ditto superb massive carved and gilt frame Conversation Stool, to correspond (no back or elbows) with squab, in Crimson Genoa velvet, *en suite*.’ This suggests that there were numerous seats upholstered in crimson damask at Wanstead, designed to match the overall scheme of the ballroom.<sup>67</sup> These descriptions correspond to the furnishings depicted by Hogarth and, whilst it has been proposed that the artist exaggerated their details, it is worth pointing out that the objects themselves are notably extravagant. The June sale catalogue describes these furnishings as *en suite*, and the use of crimson genoa velvet throughout indicates that they were intended to correspond with the other elements in the room, particularly the crimson ground Axminster carpets. These are also featured in Hogarth’s view, and were listed as lot 3 in the sale: ‘An elegant crimson-ground Axminster Hearth Rug, bordered, with the arms in the centre, 11 feet long by 3 feet wide’, and lot 4: ‘AN EXCELLENT CRIMSON-GROUND AXMINSTER CARPET, bordered, with the family crest and arms at the corners, 9 ¼ yards long by 3 ¼ yards wide.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, lot 38.

<sup>67</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, lot 46.

<sup>68</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, lot.3.

Another major feature of the ballroom, introduced around the same time as the crimson Kent furniture and the ceiling paintings, are the two large tapestries depicted in Hogarth's *Assembly* (figs 6 and 91). These correspond with descriptions in the June and September sale catalogues and the 1795 house inventory of tapestries depicting *Alexander the Great at the Battle of Granicus* and that mentioned above, showing *Telemachus and Calypso*.<sup>69</sup> They both measured twenty-two and a half by eleven and a half feet and, as Hogarth illustrates, fitted perfectly in the ballroom. As Marks points out, this indicates that they were woven especially for Wanstead.<sup>70</sup> The 1822 sale catalogue lists the tapestries as having been produced by Gobelins' tapestry works. Whilst they were similar to those designed by Charles Le Brun when he was director of the works, they were more likely to have been one of the many copies produced in Belgium in the early eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Child's ownership of tapestries similar to those designed by the Gobelin workshops indicates his eagerness to acquire commodities that would convey a European splendour.

Another artwork depicted in Hogarth's view is listed in the Robins sale catalogue as lot 167: 'PORTIA DESTROYING HERSELF BY EATING FIRE. A VERY EXQUISTELY HIGH FINISHED PICTURE OF GREAT BEAUTY AND POWERFUL EFFECT' by Godfried Schalcken (1643-1706) (fig. 93).<sup>72</sup> This

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<sup>69</sup> National Archives C 111/215, LONG v PHIPPS: Inventories of household furniture, plate, linen, china, books, wines and effects of Sir James Tilney-Long, deceased, at Draycot House near Chippenham, Wilts, and Wanstead House, Essex. Hereafter NA. See: *Wanstead House Sale*, day 10, No.18, lot.7; *Catalogue of superb Gobelin tapestry*, day 2, Lot 64 and 65.

<sup>70</sup> Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.11.

<sup>71</sup> Marks, 'Assembly at Wanstead House', p.13.

<sup>72</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot 167.

painting can be seen above the large marble fireplace. It depicts the wife of Brutus swallowing live coals on receiving the news of her husband's death. This painting, together with the bust of Julia, the faithful wife of Pompey, can be seen as motifs which support Dormont's proposal that the painting commemorated Richard and Dorothy's wedding anniversary. In addition, the tapestry visible above where Child is seated depicts, and is referred to in visitor accounts of the ballroom as showing, a group of music-making nymphs. Dormont claims this alludes to the assembly as a garden of love, a *fete galante*.<sup>73</sup> Telemachus, furthermore, was the dutiful son of the faithful Penelope and wife of Odysseus; exemplars of marital fidelity. Finally, Dorothy holding up an ace of spades, a winning card, towards her husband, Richard, chimes with this theme in the painting.

Visitor accounts and the 1795 inventory confirm that these artworks were situated in the ballroom as Hogarth depicts. However, their iconographic resonance raises difficulties, complicating our understanding of when the works were introduced into the ballroom and for what purposes. The idea that these works were already situated in the room chosen as the setting for a scene celebrating Richard and Dorothy Child's wedding anniversary seems rather fortuitous. If one assumes that such a coincidence is unlikely, two alternative possibilities immediately present themselves. One is that the works were originally located elsewhere in Wanstead House, but were imaginatively incorporated by Hogarth into the view as an additional means of marking the anniversary. Visitor accounts that refer to the painting, the bust and tapestry do all date from the second half of the eighteenth

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<sup>73</sup> Dormont, *British Painting*, p.160.

century, and they could, therefore, have been relocated following the completion of Hogarth's portrait. Indeed, they could have been relocated in response to the painting. Alternatively, it could be argued that, given that the ballroom was a recent addition to Wanstead House in 1729, one of the first celebrations to have taken place in the space could have been the Childs' wedding anniversary. It may, as a consequence, have indeed been furnished in a manner to mark this momentous family occasion.

The lack of documentation regarding the portrait, and the absence of visitor accounts from the early eighteenth century, mean that no firm conclusion can be reached on this point. The issues around these art works do, however, demonstrate the importance of cross-examining such visual evidence with visitor accounts and inventories. Whilst conversation pieces are frequently staged scenes, sometimes fictitious representations, only occasionally accurate, Hogarth's view of the Wanstead ballroom is likely to have combined both allegory and reality.<sup>74</sup> For the purposes of reconstructing the ballroom, the details of the interior do seem to be broadly accurate. The 1795 inventory and the 1822 sale catalogues do indicate that various items of furniture were rearranged, or introduced into the ballroom later in the eighteenth century, but, on the whole, the descriptions of the room remain largely consistent.

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<sup>74</sup> For another discussion of Hogarth's *Assembly at Wanstead House*, see: K. Retford, 'The topography of the conversation piece' in *Placing Faces: The portrait and the English country house in the long eighteenth century*, eds G. Perry, K. Retford and J. Vibert (Manchester, 2013), pp.44-46.



### The Saloon

The ballroom connected the northern suite of apartments to the southern suite. If we situate ourselves in Hogarth's conversation piece, then exiting through the door on the immediate right of the canvas would lead us into the back suite of apartments overlooking the gardens. Passing through a state bedchamber, a dressing room, and an antechamber, we would eventually reach the saloon.

Under the influence of the design for French royal palaces, the saloon, or salon, was a term used to describe what had previously been referred to in the sixteenth century as the 'private chamber', a room introduced for the entertainment of social equals, near equals or superiors. During the sixteenth century, the chamber had replaced the communal hall, as the most important room in the English country house, due to the declining interest in a landlord's relations with his social inferiors.<sup>75</sup> Although John Cornforth states that the definition of a 'saloon' was somewhat hazy in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the first use of the term to the publication of Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* in 1728, which describes it as 'a Grand Room, in the Middle of a Building, or at the Head of a Gallery...a state room'.<sup>76</sup> This indicates that the saloon was a relatively new phenomenon in the 1720s, only present in the most elite country house such as Blenheim, Castle Howard, Buckingham House, Canons and Wanstead. Although Campbell's plans for Wanstead only label the chapel and the library, it would seem that the saloon was

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<sup>75</sup> T. Williamson and L. Bellamy ed., *Property and Landscape: A Social History of Land Ownership and the English Countryside* (London, 1987), p.131.

<sup>76</sup> E. Chambers, *Cyclopaedia: or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 2 vols (London, 1728), I, p.12.

identified as such at an early stage in its history. Macky's 1722 account of Wanstead refers to a 'saloon' when describing entry into the house: 'From whence you enter into the great Hall fronting the Area, and a saloon fronting the garden.'<sup>77</sup> Wanstead was thus fairly advanced in having a room identified as a saloon at this early date.

As in my analysis of the ballroom and the hall, this discussion will draw on various primary sources. Contemporary descriptions of the saloon, however, provide less information here, than they do for other spaces at Wanstead. The most important source for my account is Joseph Frans Nollekens's conversation piece, commissioned by Lord Tylney in 1740 (fig. 19). George Vertue described Nollekens as being much employed by 'people of Fashion. Mostly. & particularly by Ld Castlemain Earl of Findly & -'.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, seventeen works by the artist were included in the Wanstead sale, indicating that Child was one of the artist's greatest patrons.<sup>79</sup> His painting of the family in the saloon at Wanstead was produced after Child had acquired his second earldom, of Tylney, in 1731, and after Wanstead had undergone further developments since the completion of Hogarth's portrait set in the ballroom. The commissioning of this second conversation piece in 1740 provided Child with a record of another important

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<sup>77</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.23.

<sup>78</sup> Vertue, 'Notebooks', XXII, p.137.

<sup>79</sup> The June 1822 sale catalogue lists another view by the artist with a Wanstead setting. Lot 311 on day 10 was listed as: 'Nollikins. Females bathing in a landscape, with a distant view of Wanstead House'. There is however insufficient detail of the house in the background, making it difficult to determine whether this is in fact the façade of Wanstead House. The painting currently remains untraced.

room at Wanstead, but it also demonstrated the continuity of elite, sociable life at the house, as well as commemorating his elevated social status.

As is often the case with conversation pieces, Nollekens offers the viewer a stage-like perspective of this room. Kate Retford has noted that such box-like spaces are to be seen repeatedly throughout this sub-genre of portraiture; ‘many of these paintings wear their single-point perspectival construction on their sleeves, the vanishing point emphasised through the delineation of receding floorboards, carefully positioned carpets and precisely drawn architraves.’<sup>80</sup> However, by cross-examining the painting against evidence such as Campbell’s plan in volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Retford is able to present a better sense of the room in which the sitters pose and the space out towards which they look. An additional source for this space is an anonymous and undated sketch, now held in the Essex Record Office (fig. 94). Because the sketch is undated, it is not possible to determine whether or not this is a view of the saloon as it appeared, or whether it is a sketch of a proposal for how the layout of the room might appear.

The sketch provides a plan of the saloon, and usefully includes measurements for each of the four walls, doorways and fireplace, as well as the dimensions for the paintings, and for the niches that Nollekens depicts as empty in 1740.<sup>81</sup> The

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<sup>80</sup> Retford, ‘Topography of the conversation piece’, p.46.

<sup>81</sup> See: Essex Record Office I/Mp 388/1/57, Rough plan of Saloon at Wanstead House. Hereafter ERO. Thanks to John Harris and Julius Byrant for discussions about this sketch, both of whom commented that it is unlikely to be attributed to Kent. Although the sketch provides detailed architectural information about the measurements of the room, this sketch does not seem to have been by the hand of either Colen Campbell or William Kent, nor is it sufficiently detailed or polished in comparison to sketches Kent produced for other houses such as Houghton.

positions of the paintings in the sketch match those of the pictures hanging in the background of Nollekens's view. The sketch also marks out the positioning and width of the doorways, fireplace and panelling as the same as in the Nollekens portrait. Curiously, however, the sketch and the painting both depict niches whereas Campbell's plan does not. It is unclear whether this is simply a detail that Campbell overlooked for some reason when presenting the plan, or whether these were a later addition to the design of the room.

Viewing Nollekens's portrait alongside this sketch and Campbell's section and plan can provide us with a more rounded sense of the scale and space of the saloon, as well as the positioning of artworks. The viewer becomes encapsulated within the four walls and gains a sense of the room as a whole, as well as an understanding of the saloon's positioning within the house, adjacent to the great hall and the gardens opening out on the left.<sup>82</sup>

Although caution must often be taken when treating the conversation piece as a historical source, Nollekens's portrait does transpire to be an accurate representation of this room. Previous discussions of the painting questioned whether it did in fact depict Wanstead, particularly because of what was thought to be a Venetian window depicted on the left. The 1984 exhibition catalogue for *Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England* at the V&A stated that the room portrayed could not be connected with Wanstead, as 'Venetian windows only occurred in the unexecuted tower additions designed by Campbell in 1720'.<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>82</sup> Retford, 'Topography of the conversation piece', pp.46-49; Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, pl.26.

<sup>83</sup> M. Snodin ed., *Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England* (London, 1984), p.35.

exhibition catalogue for the 1987 exhibition *Manners and Morals* likewise argued that ‘the problem is that the room cannot be connected to Wanstead, which had no Venetian windows such as the one shown here’.<sup>84</sup> However, exterior views of the south front of the house, such as the anonymous view once attributed to Charles Catton the Elder, indicates that what was believed to be a Venetian window is, in fact, the arched door which led from the saloon into the grounds (fig. 38).<sup>85</sup>

Evidence of Nollekens’s accurate portrayal of the saloon can also be found in surviving architectural features such as the fireplace situated in the centre of the portrait. Whilst much of the building material of Wanstead House has been dispersed or lost, this fireplace is now located in the building on the Hills Road in Cambridge, as is the panelling located directly above (fig. 18).<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, contemporary descriptions of the saloon as ‘richly gilt and embossed’ very much correspond with the saloon portrayed in Nollekens’s view, and the anonymous sketch features a layout that closely corresponds with that depicted in the painting.

Many conversation pieces represent fabricated or adjusted settings, in which, for example, the size or splendour of a room has been enhanced, or in which a view of an impressive landscape through a window conveniently located in the

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<sup>84</sup> E. Einberg, *Manners and Morals, Hogarth and British painting 1700-1760* (London, 1987), pp.122-123.

<sup>85</sup> Retford, ‘Topography of the conversation piece’, p.38. Retford notes that Peter Brown, former director of Fairfax House, York, pointed out that the ‘Venetian windows’ are in fact large arched doors.

<sup>86</sup> A.P Baggs, ‘The after-life of Wanstead’, *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. 5 (1996), pp.131-133. Thanks to Rosie France of the Chard Robinson Group in Cambridge for allowing me to visit the office and photograph the architectural fragments of Wanstead at no.2 Hills Road, Cambridge.

background has been manufactured. Retford thus notes that the accuracy of Nollekens's painting is rare within the conversation piece genre.<sup>87</sup> The close relationship between Nollekens and his patron, Richard Child, underscored by the number of works by the artist included in the 1822 sale, indicates that Nollekens was required to create an accurate representation of the saloon for a patron whom he knew well. Furthermore, having spent a significant amount of time at Wanstead, Nollekens would have been able accurately to depict the objects with which its interior was furnished. It is therefore most fortunate that, as a result, the Wanstead historian is provided with a largely accurate depiction of a now lost interior space.

Whilst the ceiling in the saloon is likely to have been one of the several painted by Kent, there is no record of this work in visitor accounts or in Nollekens's view. The painting does, however, show that the room was furnished with other typically Kentian features, such as the crimson chairs on which members of the family are shown seated. These correspond with those described in the inventory as '8 Mahogany Chairs covered in Crimson Velvet Brass Nail'd' (figs 95).<sup>88</sup> The use of crimson furnishings was appropriate for a room such as the saloon, which, like the ballroom, was an important, sociable space, worthy of luxurious furnishings.

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<sup>87</sup> Retford, 'Topography of the conversation piece', p.41.

<sup>88</sup> NA C 111/215, no.40. The chairs appear to have been purchased by the Earl of Pembroke at the Wanstead House sale in 1822 and have since remained at Wilton House. See: D. F Keeling, *Wanstead House and Chatsworth: treasures from Wanstead House acquired by the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire* (London, 1997).

Another example of the accuracy of Nollekens's portrait can be found in the card table around which the Child family are seated. This could well be one of the pair listed as lot 20 in the June sale as: 'A pair of Pier Card Tables, to correspond, tops to turn on swivel and lined crimson Genoa velvet, 3 feet wide.'<sup>89</sup> However, confusingly, the carpet in the centre of the portrait is described in the 1795 inventory as a 'Large Wilton Carpet', but in the June 1822 sale catalogue as '*An excellent crimson-ground Axminster Carpet, bordered with the family crest and arms at the corners.*'<sup>90</sup> Whether the carpets were changed between 1795 and 1822 is not clear, but, regardless of this ambiguity, both Wilton and Axminster were well known for their production of high quality and costly carpets in the period. And, once again, the use of the coat of arms as a decorative motif indicates Child's keenness to assert his status to those passing through his house.

In the portrait, Nollekens depicts a mythological painting hanging behind the sitters and above the fireplace. This painting is that which was sold as Lot 194 on day nine of the Wanstead sale, listed as;

CASALI – PANDORA, THE ARTIST HAS CHOSEN THE MOMENT WHEN MERCURY IS PRESENTING PANDORA TO PROMETHEUS, WHOSE EXPERIENCE TAUGHT HIM TO REFUSE, THE DANGEROUS GIFT OF JUPITER; EPIMETHEUS, HIS BROTHER, LESS WARY AND PRUDENT, FELL VIOLENTLY IN LOVE AND MARRIED HER, AND RECEIVED THE FATAL BOX WHOSE CONTENTS DIFFUSED MISERY THROUGH THE WORLD<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, lot 20.

<sup>90</sup> NA C 111/215, no.40; *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, lot 3.

<sup>91</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot.194.

There has, however, been some confusion regarding the attribution of this painting. The visitor account published in *The Ambulator* describes the painting as one of Nollekens's own works. Later accounts by William Tegg and George Atwell likewise refer to Nollekens as the creator of this picture. However, as Retford has pointed out, comparisons between *Pandora* and other works by Casali do seem to verify the 1822 attribution.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Charlotte Fermour's comments on Casali's stay at Wanstead in 1743 confirms that the artist produced works for the saloon, presumably including that of *Pandora*: 'He [Casali] is painting pictures for the salon, and I believed them well done'.<sup>93</sup> As we have seen, Casali executed a number of historical and mythological scenes for Child, and it makes sense to find another hung in a central location within the house. Nollekens also depicts other mythological scenes in his portrait, in the smaller paintings above the doorways on the left and right walls. These show scenes from Greek mythology, such as the story of Meleager and the Calydon boar hunt.<sup>94</sup>

If we are to imagine ourselves as a visitor to Wanstead, then the saloon is an appropriate end point. The doors depicted by Nollekens led into the extensive landscape: 'From this front is an easy ascent, through a fine vista, to the river Roding, which is formed into canals, and beyond it the walks and wildernesses rise up the hill, as they sloped downward before.'<sup>95</sup> In addition to the saloon's location within the house, Nollekens's conversation piece was also the last view

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<sup>92</sup> Retford, 'Topography of the conversation piece', p.56.

<sup>93</sup> RCL YW301, Charlotte Fermour to her mother, Countess of Pomfret, 13 October 1743.

<sup>94</sup> Einberg, *Manners and Morals*, p.123.

<sup>95</sup> *WANSTEAD HOUSE. The Literary chronicle and weekly review* (May 22, 1819 - Dec. 28, 1822), p.379.



of the Wanstead interior to be produced, and it therefore effectively brings this discussion to close.

The listings for the saloon in the 1795 inventory and the summer 1822 sale indicate the on-going process of furnishing the interior at Wanstead in the second half of the eighteenth century. Both sources list items of furniture not visible in Nollekens's portrait, such as lot 19 in 1822: '*An elegant Zebra wood octagon cornered Sofa Table*'<sup>96</sup>; lot 12: 'A VERY VALUABLE ANTIQUE ORIENTAL EBONY SPIRAL COLUMN';<sup>97</sup> or the 'Double Key'd Harpsichord in a Mahogany Case'.<sup>98</sup> It is possible that these are out of view in the painting, but they are more likely to have been later additions. Sculpture certainly seems to have been incorporated into the space at a later date. The niche to the left of where Child and his friends and family are seated remains empty in Nollekens's view, but a description of the saloon in 1781 describes it as 'adorned with three statues; namely Apollo, antique, Flora, Wilton, and Bacchus, ditto'.<sup>99</sup> These statues are also included in the 1795 inventory for Wanstead. However, because artworks were listed separate to the other contents of the rooms in the two Wanstead sales, it is difficult to ascertain whether these remained *in situ* until 1822.

Nollekens's depiction of the empty niches articulates the continuing process of furnishing the Wanstead interior, and again draws our attention to one of the

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<sup>96</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, lot 19.

<sup>97</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, lot 12.

<sup>98</sup> NA C 111/215.

<sup>99</sup> *Ambulator*, p.229.

prominent themes of this thesis: the constantly evolving nature of the country house. On his visit in 1748, Peter Kalm described the rooms at Wanstead as furnished in ‘the most costly way’, but also commented that the interior remained incomplete due to Child’s excessive spending: ‘This was evident both with the house and garden which had not been fully completed, because the owner’s resources did not allow him to incur further expense.’<sup>100</sup> The country house was far from the static entity it is sometimes seen to be, a wholly conceived setting, frozen in time. Rather, interiors were constantly being refurnished, redecorated, and maintained. When we look at visitor accounts of Wanstead, which mostly date from the second half of the eighteenth century, after the completion of the house, they can present a total, coherent interior scheme. However, because of the demolition of Wanstead, the historian has to piece together a range of evidence, and this draws attention to the length of time it took to form the interiors, and the successive development, extraction and addition of particular elements. This was a continually evolving space.

### **The Wanstead Landscape, 1725 – 1750**

Kalm, on his visit in 1748, is likely to have exited the saloon through the Venetian doors depicted by Nollekens, and descended the staircase into the Wanstead gardens, which he described as ‘all that can be required and produced by art in a garden’.<sup>101</sup> By this date, the landscape had undergone further transformation in response to growing antipathy towards the geometrical designs produced by

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<sup>100</sup> P. Kalm, *Account of his visit to England on his way to America* (1748), p.xi.

<sup>101</sup> Kalm, *Account of his visit to England*, p.xi.

London and Wise. Joseph Addison had criticised such designs as early as 1711, when he claimed that British gardeners;

instead of humouring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our Trees rise in Cones, Globes and Pyramids. We see the Marks of the Scissars upon every plant and bush. I do not know whether I am singular in my Opinion, but for my own part, I would rather look upon a Tree in all its Luxuriance and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut and trimmed into a Mathematical Figure.<sup>102</sup>

In 1738, Batty Langley similarly condemned the fashion for geometry in gardens, blaming London and Wise for its introduction in England:

These regular gardens were first taken from the Dutch and introduced into England in the Time of the late Mr London and Mr Wise, who being then suppos'd to be the best gardn'rs in England {the Art being in its infancy to what it is now} were employed by the Nobility and Gentry of England to lay out and Plant their gardens in that regular, stiff and stuff up manner in which many yet appear'.<sup>103</sup>

Due to Wanstead's proximity to London, and the high levels of visitors who went there, Child must have felt particular pressure to ensure that Wanstead was kept up to date with rapidly changing fashions in landscape design. Names associated with the second phase of Wanstead's landscape developments include Charles Bridgeman and William Kent, both of whom are recognised as having instigated

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<sup>102</sup> W. Addison, *The Spectator*, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1753), VIII, p.74, No.414, June 25 1712.

<sup>103</sup> B. Langley, *New Principles of Landscape Gardening or, The laying out and planting parterres, groves, wildernesses, labyrinths, avenues, parks, &c.*, (London, 1728), p.xi.

the move towards more natural landscapes.<sup>104</sup> Evidence to support their work at the estate, however, is speculative and due to their broader associations with the property, rather than any particular historical documentation.

Bridgeman has been connected with Wanstead due to his relationship with Henry Wise. When George London died in 1714, Wise entered into a partnership with Joseph Carpenter and several other men, one of who may have been Bridgeman, who had previously helped Wise in running the Brompton Park Nursery.<sup>105</sup> When Carpenter died in 1726, Bridgeman succeeded him as Wise's primary collaborator and, after Wise's death; he was left as the sole royal gardener. In addition to royal commissions, Bridgeman also carried out work at a number of private estates, one of which could have been Wanstead.<sup>106</sup> Kent's association with later developments in the landscape is not only due to his extensive work on the Wanstead interior, but also because of certain landscape features illustrated in Rocque's map of 1735 which are comparable with Kent's designs for the gardens at Esher and Chiswick (figs 96 and 97).

It is important to note, however, that developments at Wanstead did not represent a complete move away from geometry, but rather a loosening of the earlier style. This new idiom, described by Williamson as the 'late geometric' garden, emerged

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<sup>104</sup> Willis comments on a collection of drawings now held in the Bodleian Library which reflect the formal, transitional and progressive characteristics of Bridgeman's designs such as lawns, mounts, amphitheatres, ha-has, as well as rides and walks to provide key vantage points. See: P. Willis, 'Bridgeman, Charles (*d.* 1738)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3401](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3401), accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>105</sup> Willis, 'Bridgeman, Charles.'

<sup>106</sup> Willis, 'Bridgeman, Charles.'

gradually, and was the reworking of extant landscape features, rather than the adoption of an entirely new fashion.<sup>107</sup> Although complex box work had declined in popularity, and topiary had been simplified and relegated to the edges of lawns and paths, gardens did still maintain some complexity, but now in elements such as ornamental woodland, groves and wildernesses.<sup>108</sup>

Before discussing the new features of the Wanstead landscape in detail, it is important to identify those that were removed, following the completion of the house. The most notable features to be eradicated from the landscape were the parterres, the central canal and the bowling green.

In 1722, Macky described his descent into the landscape via the saloon, stating: ‘You descend from the salon into the Parterre, which hath a Canal in the middle; on the Right, a Wilderness; and on the Left, a fine green walk.’<sup>109</sup> Pierre Fougereux’s sketch of the Wanstead grounds in 1728 shows that the parterres, straight gravelled walks, and canal were still prominent features of the landscape at this date (fig. 45).<sup>110</sup> There seems, at this point, to have been little change since the gardens had been pictured in Kip and Knyff’s views, executed prior to Campbell’s rebuilding (figs 28-30). Furthermore, Fougereux’s sketches of other gardens which he visited during his tour of England, such as Wimpole, Boughton

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<sup>107</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.36.

<sup>108</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.40.

<sup>109</sup> Macky, *Journey through England*, p.22.

<sup>110</sup> National Art Library, P.J Fougereux, *Voyage d’Angleterre, d’Hollande et de Flandre, fait en l’annee 1728* (1728), p.106.

and Blenheim, indicate that Wanstead's geometric gardens were still very much commonplace in the great English estates at this time (figs 98-100).<sup>111</sup>

John Rocque's map, however, presents the viewer with a rather different view, indicating that notable developments took place between 1728 and 1735 (fig. 27). In place of the parterres, canal and bowling green, we now find a wide grassy avenue, flanked by serpentine on either side. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to show precisely when this transformation occurred in this period of seven years. Also absent from Rocque's map is the bowling green, once situated at the end of the central canal. Fougeroux makes no reference to the bowling green in 1728, nor is it clear from his illustration whether it was still in place at that date. However, it seems likely that its removal would have occurred around the same time as that of the parterres. The eradication of the bowling green, however, appears not to have removed the activity from the estate entirely. An anonymous view of the south front of Wanstead House shows a group of male figures bowling on the grassy lawn, where the parterres had previously been situated (fig. 38). This demonstrates that, despite changes in the landscape, many of the same leisure activities and the enactment of hospitality continued to be vital parts of life at Wanstead.

Rocque's plan also shows that the two semi-circular ponds, visible in Kip and Knyff's view looking west, were transformed into one large pond; an expanse of water that lay in front of the house. In December 1735, *The General Evening Post* reported: 'The Right Hon. The Earl of Tylney, having a grant from his majesty, is

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<sup>111</sup> Fougeroux, *Voyage d'Angleterre*, pp.105-107.

making a fine large pond, of about 10 Acres, on Epping Forest, fronting his house, which when finished will be exceedingly beautiful. There are near 100 Men now daily employ'd at work upon it.'<sup>112</sup> Thus, although Rocque shows the pond as complete, it seems to have still been in progress at the time of his map's execution. Similar to the anticipated extension to the house, discussed in the previous chapter, which featured in Rocque's 1735 survey of the estate, he clearly projected another work in progress into its future, finished state. Unlike the wings, however, this was a design that was fully implemented and, indeed, still exists.

There are a number of valuable visual sources for the landscape at Wanstead at this time, in addition to Rocque's plan of the house and gardens produced in 1735, which includes both a map and smaller vignettes of particular features of the estate. There is Craddock's 1725 map of Wanstead, the first surviving representation of the grounds from after the new house had been constructed (fig. 31). Another key visual source is Fougeroux's image of Wanstead, which he produced alongside his written account of the estate (fig. 45).

There are also three unattributed views of the estate, which provide further valuable evidence (figs 22, 23 and 38). One of these is now held at Parham House (fig. 22), and can be linked with lot 136 sold in June 1822. This is described as 'Gentlemen going out Hunting, with their Attendants and Dogs', and is given to Charles Catton the Elder. The June 1822 sale catalogue also attributes lot 179, 'A Birds Eye View of the Grounds and Country round Wanstead House', to the same artist, but there are two paintings which have been identified as this image, which

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<sup>112</sup> *General Evening Post* (2–4 December 1735).

both feature in John Harris's *The Artist and the Country House*.<sup>113</sup> One is taken from behind the greenhouse, depicting the south façade of the house, and is currently untraceable, held in a private collection (fig. 38). The other is now held in the Passmore Edwards Museum archive in Newham, and is an aerial perspective of Wanstead House and the surrounding landscape as it appeared circa 1730 (fig. 23). Because there is no third view attributed to Catton in the sale catalogue, it is difficult to determine which of these two was recorded as lot 179, and which was left unattributed at the time of the sale.

The painting now held in Newham has little attendant information in the way of an artist's name, title or date, but comparison between this picture and that at Parham house, 'Gentlemen going out Hunting, with their Attendants and Dogs', indicates that they are indeed by the same hand. Indeed, although the June sale catalogue (like Harris) only attributes two views of Wanstead to Catton, the similarity of the style, technique, size, and the selection of different perspectives, suggests that all three of these views were produced as a series, a set, which took the viewer on a tour of the landscape. They are therefore likely to have all been by the same artist.<sup>114</sup>

However, it is not possible to attribute this series to Charles Catton the Elder. The inclusion of wings in two of the views suggests that these paintings were produced not long after the house was completed. Furthermore, the view

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<sup>113</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 10, lot.136; J. Harris, *The Artist and the Country House: a history of country house and garden view painting in Britain, 1540 -1870* (London, 1979), p.323.

<sup>114</sup> The two views featured in Harris's *Artist and the Country House* measure 99cm x 124.5cm and 104cm x 127cm. The view of Wanstead also attributed to Catton and held in the Newham Store (previously in the Passmore Edwards Museum) measures 145cm x 233.5cm.



depicting figures bowling on the lawn must have been painted after the removal of the parterres, which Fourgeroux's drawing indicates occurred sometime after 1728. However, the view taken from the River Roding depicts the amphitheatre on the site of the second grotto, and this does not appear in Rocque's map of 1735 (figs 23 and 27). Therefore, working on the basis that this is a series, the views were most likely produced between 1728 and 1735. Catton would have been a child at the time, as he was only born in 1728.<sup>115</sup> John Harris does propose an alternative attribution, to the marine painter, Samuel Scott, but there is no record of his name in either one of the 1822 sale catalogues, or in other contemporary sources.<sup>116</sup> I will consider the views, therefore, in this thesis, as currently anonymous.

Similar to my discussion of the early landscape at Wanstead, this account will follow a visitor's likely journey through the landscape. Exiting the saloon into the gardens situated closest to the house, one would find serpentine paths and wilderness either side of a wide grassy avenue. The visitor proceeding through the serpentine paths would eventually reach the amphitheatre depicted in Rocque's 1735 map. One would then probably progress outwards into the more distant landscape, where the fortification and grotto were located.

### Serpentine paths

One of the most noticeable amendments to the landscape, evident from comparing Kip and Kniff's and Fourgeroux's views to John Rocque's map of 1735, is the

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<sup>115</sup>Anonymous, 'Catton, Charles, the elder (1728–1798)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4901](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4901), accessed 10 December 2014.

<sup>116</sup> Harris, *Artist and the Country House*, p.323.

introduction of serpentine paths (figs 27-30 and 45). It is likely, although not above all doubt, that the serpentines illustrated in Rocque's map were actually introduced rather than merely proposed; their presence in his image certainly confirms the popularity of this feature in gardens in the mid 1730s.<sup>117</sup> These paths and wildernesses, situated either side of the wide avenue, would have been constructed on the site of the four fish ponds depicted in Kip and Knyff's early views, and of the smaller parterres which surround the greenhouse in Fougeroux's 1728 drawing.

The paths led into a complex array of other serpentine walks, which connected with the original avenues and led towards various features in the landscape. Although these spaces were intended to appear and feel 'natural' to walk through, Rocque's aerial view clarifies that the two serpentine gardens mirrored one another, maintaining a sense of symmetry within the landscape, albeit in a more discreet manner than the earlier layout. The introduction of these serpentines provides a good example of the loosening of symmetry which began to occur in country house gardens of this period, and which can be identified in other estate landscapes recorded by Rocque, such as Chiswick in 1736 and Esher in 1737 (figs 96 and 97).<sup>118</sup>

Whilst the geometric gardens of the early eighteenth century had presented a highly controlled environment, the introduction of serpentines invited the individual into the landscape, to explore it as they wished. The use of serpentine

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<sup>117</sup> Unlike the network of avenues, these serpentines do not appear on Dr Rob Wiseman's LiDar scans of Wanstead Park.

<sup>118</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, pp.35-60.

pathways presented visitors with more intriguing prospects, leading them towards unsuspected features in the landscape. Rocque's 1735 map of Wanstead, for example, indicates how the serpentine paths were intended to take visitors towards features such as the amphitheatre, or the mounts. These were elements in the landscape intended to stimulate, instruct and improve on account of their classical associations, facilitating quiet contemplation, social interaction and intellectual discussion. Examples of such an experience can be found in William Gilpin's *Dialogue upon the Gardens...at Stow*, in which speakers discuss the purposefulness of the gardens in beautifying the countryside, teaching correct taste, and instructing visitors in virtue:

When I...enjoy myself in these happy Walks, I can feel my Mind expand itself, my Notions enlarge, and my Heart better disposed either for a religious Thought, or a benevolent Action: In a Word, I cannot help imagining a Taste for these exalted Pleasures contribute towards making me a better man.<sup>119</sup>

Variety and surprise were the two most commonly mentioned elements of English gardens of this period. Alexander Pope's well-known couplet in his *Epistle to Burlington* describes: 'He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds/ Surprises, varies and conceals the bounds.'<sup>120</sup> Further praise for this type of landscape can also be found in John Viscount Percival's description of Bridgeman's gardens at Stowe. In a letter to Daniel Derring, dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1724, Percival wrote: 'You think twenty times you have no more to see, and of a sudden find yourself in

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<sup>119</sup> W. Gilpin, *Dialogue upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobham, at Stow in Buckinghamshire* (London, 1748), p.49.

<sup>120</sup> Cabe Halpern, 'Uses of Paintings in Garden History', p.188.

some new garden or walk as finish'd & adorn'd as that you left.'<sup>121</sup> The variety introduced into the Wanstead landscape following the completion of Campbell's house indicates Richard Child's sensitivity to the increasingly perceived disadvantages of the earlier geometric style, and ensured that Wanstead continued to comply with new trends in landscape design.

### Amphitheatre

A visitor passing through the serpentine situated to east of the central avenue would eventually reach the amphitheatre opposite the fortification island. It is important to note that Craddock's and Rocque's maps depict different amphitheatres at Wanstead, suggesting that more than one was constructed on the grounds during the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1725, Craddock shows an amphitheatre near the central canal, on the site where the boathouse grotto was later to be constructed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Tylney (fig. 101). One of the anonymous painted views of the Wanstead landscape also depicts an amphitheatre on the site of the future grotto, as well as one opposite the fortification island (figs 102 and 103). Rocque's map of 1735 likewise depicts the amphitheatre opposite the fortification island, but the amphitheatre situated on the site of the grotto boathouse is no longer apparent (fig. 104). Another amphitheatre can instead be seen within the woodlands, near the mount to the right of the central avenue. However, there is no archaeological evidence to indicate that this amphitheatre was constructed, and so it seems most likely to have been a proposal, rather than an actual development. There are, however, some archaeological remains for the

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<sup>121</sup> As quoted in T. Mowl, *Gentlemen Players: gardeners of the English landscape* (Stroud, 2004), p.74.

amphitheatre opposite the fortification, revealing that this was indeed introduced into the Wanstead landscape by the time it was illustrated by Rocque in 1735.<sup>122</sup>

Although the construction of the amphitheatres is undocumented, it seems reasonable to attribute them to Charles Bridgeman. John Dixon Hunt comments that Bridgeman frequently designed theatrical grass spaces in his landscapes, such as the amphitheatre at Claremont, Eastbury in Dorset (1723) and at Stowe (1729) (fig. 105).<sup>123</sup> William Kent is also known to have adopted such features, such as that at Rousham, constructed around 1738.<sup>124</sup> However, whilst Kent was working at Wanstead in the early 1720s, his landscape interests do not seem to have fully developed by this point. One of the earliest pieces of evidence for Kent designing a landscape comes from his work at Stowe, c.1729. This was followed by work at Rousham (1729), Holkham Park (1733) and Esher (1733). The introduction of amphitheatres at Wanstead, first recorded in 1725, therefore, seems to have been constructed at too early a date to be reasonably attributed to Kent. It is possible that he was involved in the construction of the amphitheatre opposite the fortification island, shown by Rocque in 1735, but, in the absence of supporting evidence, this has to remain speculative. As a result, it seems most reasonable to attribute the amphitheatre under discussion to Bridgeman.

Dixon Hunt has identified the role which fantasy played in such architectural features. These landscapes were theatrical, and the buildings set within them were

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<sup>122</sup> This evidence is visible in Dr Rob Wiseman's Lidar scans of Wanstead Park. Thanks to Dr Wiseman for a discussion of these scans.

<sup>123</sup> J. Dixon Hunt, 'Landscape Architecture' in Weber, *William Kent*, p.375.

<sup>124</sup> Dixon Hunt, 'Landscape Architecture', p.373.

positions from which to view the surrounding scenery, or from which to be viewed.<sup>125</sup> Like many of the features at Wanstead, the amphitheatre was a space designed for social interaction, so that individuals could be entertained alongside one another. Rocque's plan provides two vignettes of the amphitheatre, which offer different degrees of detail (figs 106 and 107). One of the views shows figures within the amphitheatre: a male and female are in conversation in the foreground, and, in the background, another gentleman walks away from the viewer. Anne Laurence states that landscape painters commonly deployed such figures to illustrate that a landscape could serve as a site for the interactions between people, and between people and nature.<sup>126</sup>

Likewise, Tom Williamson comments that estate portraits often depict groups wandering through country house grounds, indicating that, while individual interpretation was considered important, it was appropriate to receive this stimulation in the company of peers, enforcing one's participation as a member of a particular social group.<sup>127</sup> The depiction of such populated sites reinforced Child's reputation as a host.

The inclusion of this amphitheatre also drew further classical associations into the garden. The climate of Italy had encouraged outdoor performances since the Roman period, and Italian gardens had thus long included amphitheatres among

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<sup>125</sup> Dixon Hunt, 'Landscape Architecture', p.375.

<sup>126</sup> For further discussion of figures in topographical paintings of country houses: A. Laurence, 'Space, Status and Gender in English Topographical Paintings c.1660–c.1740', *Architectural History*, Vol. 46 (2003), pp.81-94.

<sup>127</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, pp.65-68.

their various architectural features.<sup>128</sup> Despite the English climate being significantly different from that of Italy, an amphitheatre was still an appropriate feature in an estate that invited association with the classical world.

The positioning of the amphitheatre opposite the fortification at Wanstead suggests that it was also a venue from which to view the battle re-enactments that took place there.<sup>129</sup> The close proximity between these two features emphasises how such features in the landscape were conceived to work together. In the previous chapter, I mentioned a play performed in the gardens at Wanstead for Elizabeth I.<sup>130</sup> Child's amphitheatre could be seen as an effort to continue providing the kinds of entertainment historically associated with the Wanstead landscape.

### Fortification

The earliest indication of a fortification at Wanstead dates from 1725, when it was illustrated for the first time in Craddock's map (fig. 108). However, there is no evidence as to its construction, and it is unclear as to who was responsible for its introduction. Its absence from Kip and Kniff's views enables us to establish that it was constructed some time between 1713 and 1725. Sally Jeffery has noted that this fortification was perhaps one of the earliest to be created in eighteenth-

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<sup>128</sup> J. Dixon Hunt, *William Kent: Landscape garden designer* (London, 1987), p.32; Mowl, *Gentlemen Players*, p.74.

<sup>129</sup> See Dixon Hunt's discussion on theatrical spaces in landscape: Dixon Hunt, 'Landscape Architecture', p.373.

<sup>130</sup> J. Hyrn, 'Wanstead House: Elizabeth', *The Calcutta Journal of Politics and General Literature*, Vol.1, Issue 38 (February 1823), pp.599-600.

century England, reviving a fashion for such features in estates.<sup>131</sup> Later examples include the fortification at Newstead Abbey, built in 1749 (described by Walpole as ‘two silly forts’), and that at West Wycombe, constructed in 1754.<sup>132</sup>

Evidence of the fortification today is obscured by the overgrown condition of Wanstead Park but recent archaeological surveys show the distinct outline of the island (figs 109 and 110). These confirm that the anonymous view, Craddock’s map, and Rocque’s map, all portray the fortification with considerable accuracy.<sup>133</sup> As with the amphitheatre, Rocque shows its social function, depicting a boat carrying passengers, either approaching or departing from the island (fig. 111). There are numerous references to boats being used for leisurely purposes on the estate. Macky comments on a large gondola kept on the basin at Wanstead in 1722, and, in 1748, Peter Kalm describes the basin as so large, ‘that they can sail to and fro’.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, the June 1822 sale catalogue lists a number of boats, presumably used for leisure rather than utilitarian purposes.<sup>135</sup> Such evidence indicates that water based entertainments were a frequent occurrence at Wanstead, and the fortification was no doubt a highlight of such events.

The historical associations evoked by a fortification in the landscape must have contributed to its appeal at Wanstead. The Romans used such features for water-based entertainments known as *naumachia*, in which naval battles were recreated as large-scale entertainments. Such pursuits were also popular during the Tudor

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<sup>131</sup> S. Jeffery, *The Gardens of Wanstead, Proceedings of A Study Day, 1999* (London, 2003), p.55.

<sup>132</sup> Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.55.

<sup>133</sup> See Dr Rob Wiseman’s Lidar scans of Wanstead Park for evidence of the fortification.

<sup>134</sup> See: Macky, *Journey through England*, p.20; Kalm, *Account of his visit to England*, p.175.

<sup>135</sup> Wanstead House Sale, day 31, pp.387-388.



and Elizabethan periods, although there is no evidence that this type of entertainment took place at Wanstead under Dudley's ownership.<sup>136</sup> The design of the fortification at Wanstead bears a striking resemblance to Tilbury Fort in Kent, built by Bernard de Gomme for Henry VII for defensive purposes, and later used by Elizabeth I to defend London against the Spanish Armada and during the Anglo-Dutch wars (fig. 112). The use of a similar design was perhaps intended to celebrate British history, and to recall the royal connections once enjoyed by Wanstead.

Although there are no contemporary descriptions of the fortification, Jeffery suggests that, given the family's ties with the East India Company, re-enactments of pirates attacking East India ships may have been carried out for the entertainment of guests.<sup>137</sup> The fortification at Wanstead would therefore have served as a reminder to visitors of the family's mercantile successes, as well as the historical significance of the estate.

### Grotto

The earliest evidence of a grotto at Wanstead dates from 18<sup>th</sup> January 1720, when the *Daily Post* reported on a theft at the parish church, the summerhouse and a grotto: 'about ten days ago the summer house in Lord Castlemain's Gardens at

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<sup>136</sup> S. Adams ed., *Household Accounts and Disbursement books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1558-1561, 1584-1586* (Cambridge, 1995); Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.29.

<sup>137</sup> Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.56.

Wansted was also broke open, and there was stole from thence a large Pannels of glass door, as also several glass pilasters out of the Grotto'.<sup>138</sup>

This description provides us with an insight into some of the decoration used in the early grotto at Wanstead. A grotto-like structure can also be seen in the far distance of the anonymous view taken from the River Roding, thus confirming a date for the view in the early eighteenth century (fig. 113). The next representation of this feature is in Rocque's 1735 map, in which 'The Mount in the Great Lake' features as a vignette (fig. 114).

The mounts that Rocque identifies in his map presumably accommodated a grotto such as that imaged in the vignette.<sup>139</sup> Although there is no archaeological evidence to confirm its location, the position of the grotto in the anonymous view seems roughly to correspond with the location of one of the mounts in Rocque's view, which runs alongside the kitchen garden and stoves (figs 113 and 27).<sup>140</sup> As the grotto depicted by Rocque and included in the anonymous view of Wanstead cannot be seen in Kip and Kniff's images, and is not referred to in *Flora Triumphans*, it would seem that the structure was created some time between 1713 and 1720, when the *Daily Post* published its report.

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<sup>138</sup> *Daily Post* (18 January 1720). Thanks to Richard Arnopp and Tim Cozens for pointing me in the direction of this evidence.

<sup>139</sup> See also: J. Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life Magazine*, Vol. 22 (22 August 1991), pp.60-61. Harris refers to the mount containing a grotto.

<sup>140</sup> Jeffery and Arnopp note that there is no primary evidence that confirms that the grotto was situated on the mount illustrated by Rocque in 1735 and cautions that it may not have been located exactly as illustrated. Considering there is only the anonymous view taken from the River Roding, which also depicts the grotto, this cannot be treated as an entirely accurate representation of the grotto's location.

Despite the lack of evidence regarding the construction of the grotto built during Richard Child's lifetime, Harris and Jeffery have suggested that the design depicted by Rocque bears close resemblance to other landscape structures introduced by William Kent, such as Queen Caroline's Hermitage in Richmond Gardens (c.1730) and the grotto at Esher (c.1733) (figs 115 and 116). Kent had visited gardens during the ten years he had spent in Italy between 1709 and 1719, and it is possible that he created the grotto at Wanstead, during his employment there from 1720 onwards. However, the absence of documentation means that this attribution again has to remain speculative.

It is important to note that the grotto built during Richard Child's lifetime is not that which currently stands in a decrepit state in Wanstead Park (fig. 11). The grotto-boathouse that remains was that built by John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Tylney, situated near the central canal. No evidence indicates that Richard Child's grotto survived following the construction of this grotto-boathouse in the early 1760s. I will return to grottos and their meaning in estate landscapes when considering this later feature in the next chapter.

## **Conclusion**

Chapters two and three have provided detailed discussions of developments at Wanstead between 1704 and 1750. In doing so, they have emphasised the lengthy process involved in the creation of such an impressive estate. The extent of the landscaping, building and furnishing at Wanstead throughout this period reveals Richard Child's efforts to consistently comply with, and sometimes even lead contemporary tastes, and to use the Wanstead estate as a stage for projecting the

extent of his fortune. Shortly before his own death in 1747, Smart Lethieullier, Child's neighbour in Aldersbrook, wrote that: 'Ld: Tylney having this Summer made Considerable Alteration in his Park' had disturbed the spot where the Roman pavement had previously been discovered, which was now 'totally changed'.<sup>141</sup> Lethieullier's letter indicates that Child's efforts to improve the state continued well into his final years.

Richard Child died in 1750, and was buried in the family vault at the parish church on the estate, as requested in his will of 1746: 'My Body when it shall please God I shall dye I desire may be decently interred in the vault of my Family in the Parish Church of Wanstead in the County of Essex.'<sup>142</sup> In his will, Richard named his son, John, as his sole executor. However, after Richard's death, the estate was to suffer from considerable periods of absenteeism. This and the previous chapter thus cover the most active period at the Wanstead estate, prior to its dismantling in 1822. The construction of an entirely new, classical mansion put Wanstead on the map, and well and truly established the family's position amongst the landed elite.

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<sup>141</sup> S. Lethieullier, 'A letter from Smart Lethieullier, Esq; to Dr Charles Lyttleton, relating to some antiquities found in the county of Essex, Read November 27, 1746', *Archaeologia: or miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity*, 15 vols (London, 1779), I, p.73-74.

<sup>142</sup> Thanks to Tim Couzens for sharing a transcript of Richard Child's will of 1746.

## Chapter Four: 1750-1824

### Later Ownerships

The chronological account of Wanstead provided by this thesis has, so far, discussed the early owners, Josiah Child and his son, Richard, Viscount Castlemaine and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney, the improvements carried out during their ownerships, and the impact which these developments had upon the reputation of the estate. This chapter will consider the final three owners, prior to Wanstead's demolition in 1824, the latter two of which were comparatively brief. Richard's son, John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney was the next member of the family to inherit the estate.<sup>1</sup> John owned Wanstead until his death in 1784, but he spent the majority of this time living abroad in Italy and was therefore frequently absent from the property. As he never married, and had no children, the estate next passed to his nephew, James Tylney Long. He, however, was also mostly absent from the estate as, rather than residing at Wanstead, he preferred to remain at his more humble property of Draycot Cerne manor in Wiltshire. James's ownership lasted just ten years, until his death in 1794. The estate then passed to James's young son, who died aged, eleven. With no male heirs, the eldest of James's daughters, Catherine, inherited the Tylney estates in 1805.<sup>2</sup> Until she came of age, Wanstead was held by trustees and was rented by Louis Joseph, Prince de Condé between 1802 and 1807, while he was in exile during

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<sup>1</sup> L. Namier, 'TYLNEY, John, 2nd Earl Tylney (1712-84), of Wanstead, Essex', History of Parliament Online, [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/tylney-john-1712-84](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/tylney-john-1712-84), accessed 26 January 2015. Hereafter HOP.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion of inheritance, provision and heiresses in J. Habakkuk, *Marriage Debt and the Estates System* (London, 1994), pp.172-174; L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), pp.106-109.

the French revolution. It was not until 1812, when Catherine had reached her maturity and married William Wellesley Pole, son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Mornington, that Wanstead was once again regularly inhabited by a member of the family.

As in the two previous chapters, this discussion will address changes made to the estate in the period under consideration, such as John Child's introduction of a temple and grotto boathouse in the landscape, the refurbishing of Wanstead house in the early nineteenth century, and the employment of landscape designers, Humphry Repton and Lewis Kennedy, in 1813 and 1818 respectively. Finally, this chapter will discuss the revival of the estate during Catherine's ownership in the early nineteenth century, but also the financial crisis which led to its sale and dismantling. The fragmented nature of the evidence for the latter half of the century means that discussions in this chapter are necessarily presented as case studies of particular events or issues, rather than a more rounded history of a period of ownership, as in the previous chapters. However, my analysis will, once again, draw attention to the importance of animating the country house; of considering this as a constantly evolving space. The lengthy periods of neglect that I will explore, and the consequences of these both upon the estate and the owners responsible, will also highlight the significance and impact of good or bad estate management.

### **John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney: 1750-1787**

John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, was Richard Child's eldest surviving son. He was baptised on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1712 and inherited the family estates in March 1750, at

about thirty-eight years of age.<sup>3</sup> Compared to his father and grandfather, John was considerably less involved in local and national politics. Whilst Richard, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, had served as an MP three times between 1708 and 1734 (two of which were for Essex), John served just once, as MP for Malmesbury between 1761 and 1768. At a meeting at Lord Rochford's on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1759, Tylney was the first amongst the Essex Whigs to be offered the position as MP for the county, but he 'absolutely declined standing', on account that the expense of such an election would be 'near £10,000'.<sup>4</sup> By doing so, Child spurned the expectation that an estate owner would be deeply involved in local politics, helping to justify their position of power and wealth in the county. According to Lewis Namier, his biographer, John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney is not mentioned as engaged in local Essex politics after 1763, and his appearance at Parliament was minimal.<sup>5</sup>

This absence was primarily due to John spending large amounts of his time in Italy. As early as 1751, shortly after his inheritance, Smart Letheullier, the neighbour at Aldersbrook, commented on his absence: 'The social amuzements of this Neighbourhood are much Chang'd, for instead of being the Gayest & most Cheerful spot perhaps to be found in any Country, we are become as retired as if we were in Yorkshire. Tylney you know is gon abroad.'<sup>6</sup> Lethieullier's comments highlight the central role a major estate and its owner had in a locality. According to Lethieullier, the local area suffered from the absence of

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<sup>3</sup> Namier, 'TYLNEY, John.'

<sup>4</sup> Namier, 'TYLNEY, John.'

<sup>5</sup> Namier, 'TYLNEY, John.'

<sup>6</sup> British Library MS 752, f.54v, Smart Letheullier to Dr Charles Lyttelton, 20 August 1751.

Hereafter BL

Child, especially as it resulted in Wanstead becoming disconnected from the metropolis, and ‘as retired as if were in Yorkshire’.<sup>7</sup> His comments indicate that, despite an appearance akin to a country house such as Blenheim, or Houghton, Wanstead was considered differently from country estates more distant from London. Once again, we see Wanstead conceived primarily as a suburban palace, benefiting from its geographical proximity to the capital, and, as such, also benefiting those within reach of the estate.

Correspondence between Child and his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Long, reveals that, by 1752, Wanstead’s new owner was increasingly to be found in Florence.<sup>8</sup> Child’s wealth enabled him quickly to become a leading member of the Anglo-Florentine community and, in December 1752, he wrote to Long: ‘I had the very good fortune to be very intimate with the Prince and Princess of Naples, they show me on all occasions the greatest attention and I must say the same of all nobility here.’<sup>9</sup> During this period, Child appears to have left matters of estate in the hands of relatives and trusted associates. This is evident in correspondence dating from 1754, when he wrote to Sir Robert Long to thank him for informing him of business back in England; ‘it is impossible for me to express thanks for the great care you have taken of my affairs in my absence’.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> BL MS 752, f.54v.

<sup>8</sup> J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800* (London and New Haven, 1997), pp.959-960; See also: Wiltshire Swindon History Centre 947/2114, John Child to Sir Robert Long, Florence, 29 December 1752. Hereafter WSHC.

<sup>9</sup> Ingamells, *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers*, p.959; WSHC 947/2114.

<sup>10</sup> WSHC 947/2114.



By the 1760s, concerns around Child's absence were developing. In 1764, Sir Robert wrote this to his son, James Tylney Long, while he was staying with Child in Florence: 'If my Lord thinks of staying abroad longer than this summer, twill be proposed...that we may let his house, or do other things that may be necessary.'<sup>11</sup> Two months later, Sir Robert wrote to John, commenting upon a recent visit made by George III and Queen Charlotte to Wanstead House, and a rumour 'which is spread that the King was about to buy it'.<sup>12</sup> The accuracy of this gossip is unclear, but it does indicate that Child's absence from Wanstead was becoming common knowledge, and seen as requiring some action.

Child's role as MP for Malmesbury during the 1760s does indicate that he must have moved between England and Italy during this period. However, it seems that, having completed his term as MP in 1768, Child remained more or less a permanent resident in Italy, leaving matters of estate in the hands of relatives and trusted associates. Long's efforts to inform Child of estate matters, particularly those at Wanstead, were on-going and obliging. In August 1764, he wrote to Child: 'I dare say everything on this side of the water will be made easy by Xmas and I hope you have nothing to molest you where you are...I will take care of you, as well as of Every concern also of yours that shall come to any change as far as I am able.'<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> WSHC 947/2116, Letter to James Tylney Long, 25 June 1764.

<sup>12</sup> Newham Archives, Hiram Stead Newspaper Cuttings Collection, p.19. Hereafter Stead; WSHC 927/2114

<sup>13</sup> WSHC 927/2114.

Although there is no evidence to give a full picture of how the estate at Wanstead was used during this period, it is probable that the house was leased for short periods. In a letter to Sir Robert in 1765, John Child discusses Lord Rockingham's desire to 'hire or borrow Wanstead for this season'.<sup>14</sup> Child comments on his inability to say no to such requests, indicating that applications like Rockingham's were common; 'you may very well imagine that I said it was at his service'.<sup>15</sup> This is likely to have been because the leasing of a property whilst the owner was abroad was a common means of keeping an estate financially secure.

Growing criticism of Child's absence is evident in public accounts, such as that in the *Town and Country Magazine* in 1770, castigating Child's preference for a life in Italy:

I could not help be surprised that that nobleman should desert his native country, and such a magnificent home, to dwell among foreigners; where his dignity cannot be supported, and where the appellation of *Milord* affords so extensive a field for that fortune being exhausted among strangers by imposition. Which might with noble liberality be spent among his countrymen, to the advancement of the arts, the honour of himself and the support of many industrious individuals who virtually suffer much from the sums squandered abroad By English noblemen and gentlemen, who seldom are so well accommodated as they might be in their native country...<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> WSHC 947/2114.

<sup>15</sup> WSHC 947/2114.

<sup>16</sup> 'To the printer of Town and Country Magazine', *Town and Country Magazine* (London, 1770).

Crucially, the author here warns of the large amounts of wealth being wasted abroad. In 1768, William Beckford referred to Child's home in Florence as 'a fine house all over blue and silver, with stuffed birds, alabaster Cupids and a thousand prettinesses more'.<sup>17</sup> Unsurprisingly such expenditure was condemned, especially by one who owned such a 'magnificent home' in England. The same author goes on to demand an explanation for such irresponsible behaviour:

To what then are we to attribute his absence? I wish for the instruction of myself, and many others, you would...informe the public what are the reasons that incite his lordship's stay from England, to the diminution of his now buried rank, and the almost total deprivation of the benefit the neighbouring poor would receive from his estate. I beg this favour only with generous hope, that if it reaches his lordship's inspection, it may induce him to return to the deserted mansion of his pensive park.<sup>18</sup>

Two years later, *The Oxford Magazine* similarly commented on Child's absence, and its impact on Wanstead, stating: 'The Present Earl residing abroad...this beautiful Seat is now running to ruin.'<sup>19</sup> Whilst specific to John Child's personal decisions, these criticisms must also be seen within the wider context of a growing concern about absentee landowners during the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1771, for example, a correspondent to *Town and Country Magazine* complained:

When I look over Vitruvius Britannicus and see the numerous beautiful edifices in this island, I am animated with an unconquerable curiosity to visit every one...and am in

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<sup>17</sup> G. Chapman, *The Travel diaries of William Beckford of Fonthill* (Cambridge, 1928), p.164.

<sup>18</sup> 'To the printer of Town and Country Magazine'.

<sup>19</sup> 'D rription of TILNEY HOUSE, on EPPING-FOREST', *The Oxford Magazine or Universal Museum*, Vol. 8 (London 1772), pp.242-243.

hopes to find, that an hospitality reigns within the walls proportionable to the beauty of the architecture without; but how greatly I am mortified to find that scarce one in twenty is inhabited! 'Does my lord reside here constantly?' 'No Sir, he has not been here these four years.' Such is the customary answer.<sup>20</sup>

Absence from the estate whilst a landowner resided in London was one matter, and common, but to leave the country entirely was considered by many as unpatriotic, and unworthy of one of high status. In that piece from 1771, the *Town and Country* refers to Child's 'now buried rank', averring that 'his dignity cannot be supported'.<sup>21</sup>

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Grand Tour had reached its peak in popularity, and many young English gentlemen travelled through Italy. However, Child is first recorded as in Italy when he was about forty years of age, and so he was too old to be classed amongst those youthful members of the elite completing their education on the Tour. Child also stayed in Italy for much longer than was normal, consequently generating rumours that he was one of a number of homosexual English gentlemen, such as 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Cowper and Horace Mann, who felt unwelcome back home, and found life in Italy more accommodating.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Agrippus, 'Reflections on seeing Lord Tylney's House', *Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 3 (1771), p.429.

<sup>21</sup> 'To the printer of Town and Country Magazine'.

<sup>22</sup> See: Thomas Patch, *British Gentlemen at Sir Horace Mann's House in Florence*, Oil on Canvas, 96.4 x 124.3 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. The portrait shows Child seated in the centre of a group of gentlemen dining at Mann's residence. Mann was amongst the permanent British residents in Italy, remaining a British representative in Florence until his death in 1786. Patch's inclusion of Child in his portrait of a group of gentlemen at

### **Improvements carried by John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney**

In 1775, Walter Harrison wrote of Wanstead that 'the present lord has resided many years in Italy...nor is there any prospect of his returning to England'.<sup>23</sup> However, despite his long sojourns abroad, Child did make a number of improvements to the landscape at Wanstead during the 1760s, which were in line with the latest gardening trends. The improvements carried out included the construction of a new grotto overlooking the ornamental waters, and a new garden structure, described later in the nineteenth century as 'the temple' (figs 11 and 12).<sup>24</sup> It is important that this grotto is not confused with the earlier grotto built at Wanstead during the 1720s. By this period, this early structure seems to have been demolished.

On the one hand, such additions were part and parcel of inheriting an estate, when new owners were expected to carry out improvements and adapt to current trends. However, this work could well also have been driven, to some extent, by a desire to counter the negative perceptions circulating around Child's lifestyle, and his sustained absence from Wanstead. By initiating these changes, he could demonstrate some level of commitment to his role as an estate owner, even whilst away.

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Mann's residence confirms that he too was closely tied to this group. Thomas Patch was an artist who had been banished from Rome for 'unnameable practices' (of homosexuality).

<sup>23</sup> W. Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1775), p.577.

<sup>24</sup> Tegg's *Sketch of Wanstead Park* refers to the structure as the Temple. Tegg's guide to Wanstead Park was produced to coincide with the City of London's purchase of the grounds c.1882. It is therefore possible that the name 'The Temple' was given by the City of London Corporation at this time. See: W. Tegg, *A Sketch of Wanstead Park and of the House which formerly stood there* (London, 1882), p.5.

My discussion of the grotto and the temple differ from others in this study, because these are amongst the few features of the eighteenth-century estate that remain in situ. The temple is a Grade II listed building, which now serves as the visitor centre for Wanstead Park, and is kept in good condition. Despite some refurbishment, through which the length of the building was extended, it appears more or less as it did during John Child's ownership. Likewise, the grotto survived the demolition of Wanstead House in 1824. Although its interior was lost to a fire in 1884, much of the external structure remains, albeit in a dilapidated condition, and, like the Temple, it is listed as a Grade II structure.

#### The Grotto-boathouse

The construction of two grottoes at Wanstead during two different periods of ownership reflects the enduring popularity of these features throughout the eighteenth century. The grotto was an element commonly found in Ancient Roman and Greek gardens, generally defined as an artificial cavern, usually including fountains or other water works, and decorated with rock, shell-work, crystals, sculptures and ceramic reliefs.<sup>25</sup> The revival of the grotto during the Renaissance period, most notably by the architect and theatre designer, Bernardo Buontalenti at Boboli in Florence, the Villa d'Este at Tivoli and the Villa Lante at Bagnaia, had a considerable influence upon the eighteenth-century English gentlemen who visited these gardens during their Grand Tours.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> J. Fleming, H. Honour and N. Pevsner ed., *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (1998, London), p.243.

<sup>26</sup> Fleming, Honour and Pevsner, *Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape*, p.243.

In order to avoid confusion with the earlier grotto, John Child's grotto is best described as the 'grotto-boathouse'.<sup>27</sup> Charles Heathcote Tatham's sketch made in 1822 shows that the lower level of the structure consisted of a pre-existing space used for the storage and repair of boats as well as accommodation for a keeper (fig. 117).<sup>28</sup> The construction of a grotto on top of the boathouse rendered a fundamentally utilitarian structure more attractive within the landscape. Similar examples of grotto-boathouses designed by the landscape architect Richard Woods for gardens at Cannon Hall, Yorkshire (1760), Cusworth Hall, Doncaster (1761) and Wivenhoe, Essex (1776) (fig. 118) are restrained in comparison, but also show attempts to conceal these utilitarian structures during this period.<sup>29</sup>

The construction of a new grotto by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney in a different location to its predecessor is significant, suggesting that this was a landscape feature considered in need of improvement. The new grotto was built on the site of one of the amphitheatres illustrated in James Craddock's map of 1725 (fig. 101), and it overlooked the ornamental waters situated near the River Roding. Although there is no evidence to suggest when exactly work began on the new grotto, a set of accounts made in 1761 and 1762 record 'sending rocks for the grotto' and, in 1763, Jerome Lalande, a French astronomer, wrote of a visit to Wanstead: 'I

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<sup>27</sup> J. Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life Magazine*, Vol. 22 (22 August 1991), pp.60-61; S. Jeffery, *The Gardens of Wanstead, Proceedings of A Study Day, 1999* (London, 2003), pp.32-35.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffery notes that archaeological reports prove that the boathouse level dates from before the upper grotto level, confirming that the grotto structure was built as two separate parts in two different periods. See: Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.33.

<sup>29</sup> F. Cowell, *Richard Woods (1715-1793): Master of the Pleasure Garden* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp.95-98.

went to the grotto and it was very neat about it', indicating that the structure had recently been completed.<sup>30</sup>

Evidence of the grotto-boathouse's appearance can be found in contemporary accounts, photography and material evidence on site.<sup>31</sup> In April 1776, Samuel Curwen visited Wanstead and described the grotto as 'formed of earth, stone, stumps &c excavated...into a room about 15 feet in diameter'.<sup>32</sup> Curwen's account also provides a description of the grotto's interior, stating that the ceiling was covered with 'shells, stones and petrified substances', consisting of a concave roof and a 'balcony of glass windows forming a skylight'.<sup>33</sup> The floor was made from 'small pebbles not bigger than the top of one's thumb of a variety of colours and figures'.<sup>34</sup> In 1788, the Reverend Stebbing Shaw likewise commented on the grotto as 'judiciously adorned with every variety of shells, fossils, petrifications, &c', and claimed that its entire contents had cost £2,000, consisting of 'very valuable materials'.<sup>35</sup> The remains of the grotto-boathouse provide evidence of the original brick structure, which was embellished with various shaped rocks to give it the natural appearance desired. Finally, a

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<sup>30</sup> Essex Record Office D/DU 546/2, *An antiquary's notebook kept by Alfred Savill of Chigwell Hall*. Hereafter ERO; Redbridge Central Library, Letter to Earl Tylney dated 25 February 1764 from Draycot. Hereafter RCL.

<sup>31</sup> The visitor centre at Wanstead Park, in the temple, displays rocks and pieces of glass, like those described by Samuel Curwen found in previous archaeological excavations at Wanstead Park.

<sup>32</sup> Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', p.62

<sup>33</sup> Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', p.62. No reference regarding Curwen's description is provided in this article. Many thanks to John Harris for a discussion regarding this reference, obtained from the back of C.H Tatham's sketch of the grotto (1822), now in a private collection.

<sup>34</sup> Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', pp.60-61.

<sup>35</sup> Rev. S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England in 1788* (London, 1788), p.31.



sculpture of an eagle and snake, derived from the Tylney coat of arms, was discovered in the surrounding waters whilst excavations were being carried out during the late 1990s. This presumably once surmounted the structure (fig. 119).<sup>36</sup> Much like the use of the coat of arms to adorn furniture in the interior of the house, such deployment here, in the landscape, helped to emphasise the status of the Tylney family and the estate.

There is little evidence to establish the architect responsible for the construction and design of the grotto-boathouse. Some local historians suggest that the site could be attributed to Joseph Lane and his son Josiah, responsible for the construction of Charles Hamilton's grotto at Painshill, Cobham (c. 1740) (figs 120 and 121), as well as those at Oatlands Park, Weybridge (1747) and Fonthill in Wiltshire (c. 1750), but there is no firm evidence to support such an attribution.<sup>37</sup> However, the designs for the grotto-boathouse were broadly in line with contemporary methods in grotto construction. In 1758, the astronomer-turned-landscape-designer, Thomas Wright published engravings of six grotto designs for the second edition of *Universal Architecture*.<sup>38</sup> Plate H shows a design for a grotto 'of the Rustic kind', distinctly similar to that at Wanstead (fig. 122).<sup>39</sup> Wright advised that the grotto:

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<sup>36</sup> Jeffery cites an undated cutting, which refers to the grotto and states that 'upon the apex of its arch there is still the Eagle and the Snake.' See: Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.33.

<sup>37</sup> For literature on Josiah and Joseph Lane see: C. Thacker, *Masters of the Grotto: Joseph and Josiah Lane* (Salisbury, 1976).

<sup>38</sup> E. Harris, *Arbours & grottos. A facsimile of the two parts of Universal Architecture, 1755 and 1758, with a catalogue of Wright's works in architecture and garden design* (London, 1979).

<sup>39</sup> Harris, *Arbours & grottos*, plate H.

be form'd out of the solid Rock, and may with the greatest propriety be ornamented with Ore, Fossils, Coralines and Moss...the situation is supposed to be low, must be refined, and will have a most agreeable Effect, if by the side of a River or Lake. As an Object it will best appear at a proper Distance within the powers of reflection from the water before it.<sup>40</sup>

As the contemporary descriptions and surviving evidence of the Wanstead grotto indicate, John Child's grotto was constructed in this manner.

The materials used in grotto design included an array of natural materials, stones, minerals, stalactites; internally and externally to make it seem as if the structure had risen from the earth. This was because there was a sense that a grotto could achieve a desired balance between man-made art and nature; an important goal for many eighteenth-century architects and designers.<sup>41</sup> In the grounds of Palladian country houses, which rigidly followed classical architectural principles, the construction of such an intermediary structure was particularly important now that the taste for the geometric gardens popularised by London and Wise, which had mirrored the symmetry of the main building's architecture, had fallen out of favour.

The grotto's relationship between art and nature was an ancient concept. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a copy of which was held in the Wanstead library, explores the intentions behind the grotto's design as a 'natural' structure; 'in a most secret

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<sup>40</sup> Harris, *Arbours & grottos*.

<sup>41</sup> D. Balmori, 'Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure: Eighteenth-Century Experiments in Mediation', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (March 1991), p.38.

nook, there was a well shaded grotto, wrought by no artist's hand. But Nature by her own cunning hand imitated art.'<sup>42</sup> Ovid's text notes how the grotto could closely imitate the natural world, placing the beauty of nature and art in parallel. This expression of a harmonious relationship between natural and man-made beauty had great significance for Alexander Pope, when constructing his famous and influential grotto at Twickenham during the early eighteenth century (fig. 123).<sup>43</sup>

In addition to rough, natural materials, statues, broken urns and crumbling columns were also used to adorn the exteriors of these grottoes in order to evoke classical antiquity. The display of Greek mythological statues on the Wanstead grotto, such as Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia, who was rescued from a sea monster by her husband Perseus (fig. 124), was an attempt to recreate a sense of the ancient in the grounds of a recently established landscape. Child's use of such mythological statues indicates the increasing interest in Greek antiquity during the second half of the eighteenth century, following the publication of Johann Winckelmann's *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Art*

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<sup>42</sup> *Wanstead House, Essex. Magnificent Furniture, Collection of Fine Paintings and Sculpture, Massive Silver and Gilt Plate, Splendid Library of Choice Books, The Valuable Cellars of Fine-Flavoured Old Wines, Ales, &c., &c.* (London, 1822), day 31, lot 53. Hereafter: *Wanstead House Sale*, day 23, lot.357. The sale catalogue notes that this was a 1742 publication suggesting it could have been bought by Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney or John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tylney. Nonetheless it is a text which John Child would have been undoubtedly familiar with; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, pp.157-161 as quoted in Balmori, 'Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure', p.44.

<sup>43</sup> For literature on Pope's grotto see: A. B Wilson, 'Alexander Pope's Grotto in Twickenham', *Garden History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer 1998), pp.31-59; F. Bracher, 'Pope's Grotto: The Maze of Fancy', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (February 1949), pp.141-162; Balmori, 'Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure'.

(1755-56) and James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* (1762).

The sculptures that adorned the grotto façade are likely to have been amongst the numerous items that John Child acquired whilst abroad. Evidence of his interest in collecting classical sculpture is provided by a letter he wrote to Sir Robert Long in September 1752, saying that he had sent back a number of cases from Italy to England, 'amongst which is a little Antique Boy which I had a good Bargain'.<sup>44</sup>

Whilst the grotto at Wanstead alluded to classical mythology in its use of sculpture and a design imitative of Buontalenti's grottoes, it also included elements that evoked associations with Ancient Britain. This is evident in a published text featured in *The London Magazine* in 1764 around the time of its completion, for *the GROTTO in Earl Tilney's Gardens at Wanstead*:

WHEN the moon at midnight reigns,  
And half enchants the shaggy plains,  
From their cances on the green,  
Hither hies the fairy queen  
With her knights, and ladies fair,  
All buxom, blith, and debonair.  
Then they touch the magic string;  
Then the sweet-note minstrels sing  
Strains, such as raise the sheeted dead;  
Philomela in the shade,  
Suspends her pipe, and listens by  
Whilst the sirens nine, reply.

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<sup>44</sup> WSHC 947/2114.

But, when young Aurora comes,  
They desert these shining domes,  
And with swift wing all the host,  
Flit to the Atlantic coast;  
Till from thence desery'd, and then  
Pale night beholds them here again.<sup>45</sup>

The medley of associations is evocative. The poem incorporates Greek and Roman allusions, referring to Philomela, who is transformed into a nightingale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and to Aurora, the Roman goddess of dawn. However, the poem's account of the fairy queen, 'With her knights, and ladies fair', probably refers to Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queen*, published in 1590 and again in 1596. Furthermore, Spenser's verse had been dedicated to Elizabeth I, suggesting that Tudor lineage led back to King Arthur. It is these Arthurian knights and ladies who 'touch the magic string' and make the 'sweet minstrels sing' at the Wanstead grotto. Connections between Wanstead and Queen Elizabeth have already been discussed in chapter one. She had paid frequent visits to the estate, and a play by Philip Sidney had been performed in the landscape especially for the Queen. Whilst Wanstead was a recently established estate, it thus had, nonetheless, significant historical associations, particularly with Elizabethan England. Reminding visitors of these historical ties helped further to assert Wanstead's importance.

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<sup>45</sup> 'Inscription for the Grotto in Earl Tilney's Gardens at Wanstead', *London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, 1747-1783 (March 1764), pp.153.

The description of the poem in this newspaper as an ‘Inscription *for* the Grotto’ makes it difficult to determine whether this poem was *dedicated* to the grotto at Wanstead, or whether it was actually inscribed onto the structure. Certainly, the earlier grotto on the estate had featured inscriptions; ‘on [several glass pilasters] divers persons names were write with diamonds’.<sup>46</sup> Poetic inscriptions were a popular means of embellishing landscape architecture, urns and garden seats. Kent’s grotto at Stowe, for example, featured a marble tablet inscribed with lines from the seventeenth-century English poet, John Milton. There is, however, no evidence to confirm whether the poem in the *London Magazine* was an inscription or not. Nonetheless, the references to British history are particularly significant and, indeed, these appear again, a few years later, in 1768, in a visitor’s description of a theatrical performance at the grotto, put on by Child himself. This is worth quoting at length:

His Lordship smites the water with King Arthur’s sword, all the company are still, a rumble sucking noise comes in front of the opening of the grotto the water as if boiling and to the horror of all the company both on the water and on the shore scream with fright, appearing as though from the depth of hell arose a ghastly coffin covered with slim and other things. Silence as though relief, when suddenly with a creaking and ghostly groaning the lid slid off and up sat a terrible apparition with outstretched hand screeching in a hollow voice, give me my gift with such violence, that some of the company fell into the water and had to be saved, and those on the shore scrambled in all ways confusion was everywhere. We almost fainted with fright and was only stayed from the same fate by the hand of his Lordship, who handed the keeper the dove (fake) the keeper shut its hand and with a gurgling noise vanished with a clang of its lid, and all went pitch. Then the roof of the grotto glowed two times lighting the water and the

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<sup>46</sup> *Daily Post*, 18 January 1720.

company a little, nothing was to be seen of the keeper of his coffin, as though it did not happen.<sup>47</sup>

The visitor claims that Child struck the water with King Arthur's sword, Excalibur, known for its magical powers. The setting of the performance by the water would have been most appropriate if it was indeed attempting to evoke the Post Vulgate Cycle, a French prose cycle of the Arthurian legend written around 1230–1240, in which the Lady of the Lake gives Excalibur, taken from the water, to King Arthur. The visitor's account emphasises the terror and theatricality of the performance, claiming 'we almost fainted with fright', and noting that the 'rumble, sucking noises', 'boiling water' and glowing of the grotto 'two times lighting the water' was reminiscent of the theatrical experience of the Grotto of the Deluge at Pratolino, which, according to the English travel writer, Fynes Moryson in 1594, featured 'unseen Waters cause a noise like thunder, and presently a great shower falls'.<sup>48</sup>

Child's performance, in which he took on the role of the King Arthur figure, was undoubtedly influenced by the theatrical experience of these Italian Renaissance grottoes. However, his efforts to connect these experiences with British mythology by evoking scenes of the Arthurian legend were presumably also intended to celebrate British history and culture in the grounds at Wanstead and, crucially, to engage with the growing interest in the Gothic in the 1760s. Horace Walpole's construction of his medieval-inspired Strawberry Hill had been

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<sup>47</sup> Jeffery, *The Gardens of Wanstead*, p.33.

<sup>48</sup> W. Smith, 'Pratolino', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December, 1961), p.157.

completed in 1763, and his Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* was published in 1764.<sup>49</sup> Walpole's close relationship with Horace Mann, with whom Child frequently socialized whilst residing in Florence, combined with evidence of Child's own encounters with Walpole during the 1750s and 1760s, suggest that he would have been familiar with *Otranto* and the broader, emerging interest in both the Gothic and Ancient British history at this time.<sup>50</sup>

Sam Smiles states that growing interest in Britain's own history was stimulated by contemporary concerns around national identity, and a shift away from the preoccupation with the Augustan age which, during the first half of the eighteenth century, had served as the model with which Georgian society had most wished to be associated.<sup>51</sup> According to Martin Myrone, artists, critics and writers began to re-evaluate ideals of national heroism after the British victory of the Seven Year War in 1763.<sup>52</sup> New ideas of the male role model were spectacular and drawn from real and invented medieval legend, Latin and Greek texts or ancient history. In this context, it is significant that the author of the *London Magazine*'s poem for the Wanstead grotto draws upon text from Spencer's fairy queen, a poem with an allegorical presentation of virtues represented by Arthurian knights, considered alongside texts by Shakespeare and

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<sup>49</sup> P. Langford, 'Walpole, Horatio, fourth earl of Orford (1717–1797)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28596>, accessed 29 April 2016. Hereafter ODNB.

<sup>50</sup> *Correspondence of Horace Walpole with George Montagu, Esq.*, 3 vols, 1735-1759 (London, 1837), I.

<sup>51</sup> S. Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven and London, 1994), p.9.

<sup>52</sup> M. Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming British Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810* (London and New Haven, 2005), p.9.



Milton to be a valuable source from which to draw new ideas of British masculinity, heroism and national identity.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, it was believed that only the eighteenth-century elite would be able to emulate these heroic, historical or imagined figures and consequently, they should only be presented in the socially elite and restricted spaces of the country house or palace.<sup>54</sup> Child's performance at the Wanstead grotto was presumably for select guests. A neglect or lack of interest in British history could be considered unpatriotic, a characteristic from which any major landed estate owner would want to disassociate himself.<sup>55</sup> Child's performance at the Wanstead grotto, and his undertaking of the role of a major medieval hero, may relate to the rumours around his regular visits to Italy, and his homosexuality, described by the likes of Lord Fitzwilliam as 'unpatriotic'.<sup>56</sup> This could have encouraged him to demonstrate his appreciation for British national identity, and new ideals of British heroism.<sup>57</sup>

The grotto-boathouse's associations with classical culture and British history, combined with the display of curiosities from the natural world, was clearly attractive to the eighteenth-century virtuosi or naturalist. The 1764 *Inscription for the GROTTTO*, and the account of the performance in 1768, sheds some light

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<sup>53</sup> M. Myrone, *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (London, 2006), p.73.

<sup>54</sup> Myrone, *Gothic Nightmares*, p.73.

<sup>55</sup> Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity*, p.9.

<sup>56</sup> H. Belsey, 'Mann, Sir Horatio, first baronet (bap. 1706, d. 1786)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17945](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17945), accessed 8 April 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Belsey, 'Mann, Sir Horatio'.

on the kind of visitors who might have encountered the grotto. Understanding the literary and classical connotations of such a text or performance indicated shared knowledge and experience, rooted in elite education. In 1763, Lalande described the recently completed ‘stone grotto where all conceivable curiosities of natural history are assembled’.<sup>58</sup> Shaw’s description of the grotto in 1788 also supports this point, as he stated that it was ‘not only to attract the notice of visitors in general, but the admiration of naturalists and virtuosos’.<sup>59</sup>

Henry Peachman’s *The Compleat Gentleman* (1634) includes amongst the earliest uses of the term ‘virtuosi’, describing it as an Italian reference to a collector of art and antiquities. In 1660, John Evelyn similarly used the term to describe a collector of ‘Pictures, Achates, Medaills, & Flowers’.<sup>60</sup> By the eighteenth century, ‘virtuosi’ had come to be a term of either praise or disparagement, but overall it was associated with knowledge, education and cultivation, attributes that broadly defined the eighteenth-century gentleman. The ability to represent oneself in such a manner, through the construction of a landscape feature like the grotto, would have been useful for a landowner’s reputation. For Child, who suffered considerable criticism for his sojourns abroad, this was arguably a means of protecting his reputation and that of the Wanstead estate.

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<sup>58</sup> J. Lalande, *Diary of a Trip to England* (London, 1763). Many thanks to Richard Arnopp and the Friends of Wanstead Park for providing a transcript of this material.

<sup>59</sup> Shaw, *Tour to the West*, p.32.

<sup>60</sup> ‘virtuoso, n. and adj.’, *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, [www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/223848?redirectedFrom=virtuosi#eid](http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/223848?redirectedFrom=virtuosi#eid), accessed 3 March 2016. Hereafter OED.

Craig Hanson has noted that there were debates over what type of knowledge was considered most useful to society, and concerns about achieving the correct balance between abstract and applied forms of knowledge. Falling in love with rarity for rarity's sake was described by Shaftesbury as the act of the 'inferior virtuosi'.<sup>61</sup> Shaw's commentary on the grotto-boathouse as attractive to both the general visitor and the virtuosi shows that this was a structure perceived, by this commentator at least, to achieve a balance. Although the eighteenth-century virtuosi would recognise the significance of the range of classical symbols and natural materials that the grotto displayed, it was also a structure that could engage the more 'ordinary' visitor.

Diana Balmori states that, whilst the interiors of eighteenth-century grottos were generally adorned in various materials, this was also a space of domesticity that was linked to the house on the grounds in which it stood.<sup>62</sup> Although there are no contemporary images of sociability at the Wanstead grotto-boathouse, it did clearly accommodate visitors. Shaw describes the space as 'large enough to entertain a company of twenty'.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the June 1822 sale catalogue listings for the grotto include a '3-feet mahogany Card Table, top lined green cloth'.<sup>64</sup> The September sale catalogue, meanwhile, records exotic furnishings in this location, such as 'two bamboo Chinese-frame Elbow Chairs with cane

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<sup>61</sup> C. Hanson, *The English Virtuoso: art, medicine, and antiquarianism in the age of Empiricism* (London, 2009), p.6.

<sup>62</sup> Balmori, 'Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure', pp.38-56.

<sup>63</sup> Shaw, *Tour to the West*, p.32.

<sup>64</sup> Shaw, *Tour to the West*, p.31; *Wanstead House Sale*, day 31, lot 53.

seats', presumably intended to accommodate guests.<sup>65</sup> This evidence thus indicates that the grotto at Wanstead, served as a site for entertaining family and friends. Evidence of other grottoes possessing similar spaces for the purposes of entertainment can be noted at Joseph and Josiah Lane's grotto at Oatlands, Weybridge. This included a gaming room, furnished with card tables and Chinese furniture.<sup>66</sup>

Although Balmori states that grottoes generally declined in popularity during the second half of the eighteenth century, the grotto-boathouse at Wanstead appears to have maintained its popularity.<sup>67</sup> When landscape designer, Humphry Repton, was employed at the estate in 1813, he described the grotto as a 'sumptuous specimen' and admired it as a feature of a 'various' landscape; 'at such a distance as makes it an object to which the Walks may lead; since Walks in pleasure grounds although beautiful in themselves, must have some interest beyond the mere serpentine lines, however graceful'.<sup>68</sup> It was also recognised as luxurious. James Dugdale's *New British Traveller*, published in 1818, for example, describes 'a curious grotto, constructed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, at an expense of £2,000, independent of its costly materials.'<sup>69</sup> Such comments,

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<sup>65</sup> Bibliotheque National France CVE 39280, *A Catalogue of the superb Gobelin tapestry, beautiful damask and velvet hangings, and other articles, of the princely mansion, Wanstead house, deferred at the late sale, together with various uncleared lots* (London, 1822), p.49.

<sup>66</sup> Thacker, *Masters of the Grotto*, p.19.

<sup>67</sup> Balmori, 'Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure', p.38.

<sup>68</sup> Sir Paul Getty Library, H. Repton, *Report on Wanstead Landscape*, (1813). Thanks to Bryan Maggs for allowing me access to this material. Hereafter PGL.

<sup>69</sup> J. Dugdale, *The New British Traveller: Or, Modern Panorama of England and Wales*, 4 vols, (London, 1819), II, p.410.

together with descriptions from the second half of the eighteenth century, are testament to the lasting success of this addition to the Wanstead landscape.

### The Temple

Walking north of the grotto in the time of John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, amidst the groves, one would reach a second new architectural structure in the landscape. Since the City of London purchased the grounds of Wanstead in 1882, this building has been referred to as ‘the temple’, on account of its portico façade (fig. 12). However, the earliest visual evidence for a structure on this site is in Peter Searle’s map of Wanstead, produced in 1775 (fig. 125). Here it is recorded as the ‘Poultry House’.<sup>70</sup> John Doyley’s c.1815-16 map later identifies the building as the ‘Keepers Lodge and Pheasantry’ (fig. 126).<sup>71</sup> The 1822 sale catalogues do not include any listings for a structure called the ‘temple’ but, instead, refer to a Game Keeper’s Cottage and a washhouse.<sup>72</sup> This indicates that the building was primarily a utilitarian structure during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, serving several functions.

Given its temple-like design, however, it is likely that this building also served as a garden summerhouse, the lower levels beneath providing the utilitarian spaces which Searle and Doyley describe. As with the grotto-boathouse, the temple was conceived in a manner so as to conceal signs of the building’s practical functions, allowing it to serve as an aesthetic object in the landscape. Fronting the structure with a portico would have evoked classical associations

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<sup>70</sup> ERO D/DCw P59, L. Searles, *A Survey of Wanstead Park*, 1779.

<sup>71</sup> ERO D/DCY P2A, J. Doyley, *Plan of Wanstead*, c.1815-16.

<sup>72</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 31.

akin to those of Wanstead House itself, reminding visitors who had wandered this far that they remained on the Tylney estate.

The classical design for this building would have also made the structure more pleasing to the wandering eye and, like the grotto, enabled it to function as a focal point along the extensive network of avenues. Sally Jeffery notes that it was common for such structures to be given classical facades, in order that they might blend into the estate landscape more effectively.<sup>73</sup> Similar examples can be seen in Robert Adam's pheasant house at Kedleston Hall (c.1760) and John Vanbrugh's design for the Temple of the Four Winds at Castle Howard (c.1728) (figs 127 and 128). The latter included a small kitchen on the lower level to provide food for those seated inside the garden house above. The inclusion of spaces with practical functions within such landscape features echoed recommendations made by Joseph Spence in 1751; 'to mix useful things even in the ornamental parts, and something of ornament even in the useful parts'.<sup>74</sup>

Although representations of 'the temple' do not appear until Searle's 1775 map of the estate, proposals for such a structure were certainly being considered as early as 1759. At this date, the architect William Chambers dedicated a design to Lord Tylney in his *Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* (fig. 129). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney was a subscriber to this volume, and a copy was

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<sup>73</sup> Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.32.

<sup>74</sup> J. M. Osborn ed., *Joseph Spence: Observations, anecdotes and characters of books and men* (Oxford, 1996), p.648.

recorded in the Wanstead House library at the time of the 1822 sale.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, as Chambers and Child had both been in Florence in 1753, it is likely that they had discussed designs for the structure then.<sup>76</sup> Chambers's description reads; 'designed by me some years ago...and proposed to be erected at Wanstead'.<sup>77</sup> His illustration shows a raised Doric Octagon Temple with a domed cupola, flanked by two classical urns and topped with a small balustrade balcony, presumably intended to look out upon the surrounding landscape. This design was similar to others made by Chambers for other subscribers to his *Treatise*, such as Henry Willoughby Esq. of Birdhall and John Hall Stevenson Esq. (figs 130 and 131).

The temple as erected differed substantially, however, from that illustrated in Chambers's text. Instead of featuring the domed cupola shown in the plate, the temple was given a hexastyle portico, much like that of Wanstead House itself, supported by four columns of the Tuscan order (fig. 12). Searle's 1779 map of Wanstead shows the building with wings flanking the central bay (fig. 132). However, repair work undertaken in 1997 uncovered evidence of penny-struck pointing on the walls of this central section. This is a building technique used for the construction of outer walls, therefore indicating that the wings were an extension made after the temple's initial construction.<sup>78</sup> The addition to the south

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<sup>75</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 23, lot.449; W. Chambers, *Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* (London 1791), p.136.

<sup>76</sup> Ingamells, *Dictionary of British and Irish travellers*, pp.194-195.

<sup>77</sup> Chambers, *Treatise*, p.136.

<sup>78</sup> This is a decorative feature often used for exterior walls. Thanks to Sally Jeffery for a discussion regarding this feature.

facing side of the temple first appears on the 1863 Ordnance survey map, and therefore postdates the period under consideration here (fig. 133).<sup>79</sup>

There is no further evidence of Chambers's involvement with Wanstead, but his design does indicate that John Child was contemplating additions to the landscape shortly after his inheritance, whilst first residing in Italy. The extant temple can be attributed to the architect John Vardy, on account of a payment of twenty-five pounds made on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1762, to a 'Mr Vardy'.<sup>80</sup> There is no evidence to clarify why Chambers's design was not executed, but it is worth noting that Vardy was a close associate of William Kent, who, as discussed in the previous chapter, carried out a substantial amount of work at Wanstead. At the start of his career, Vardy had served as an assistant to Kent and, following Kent's death in 1748, he became responsible for the posthumous supervision of various unfinished schemes, such as the Horse Guards in Whitehall (1750–59).<sup>81</sup> This close relationship means that Vardy was probably familiar with Wanstead, and so arguably a logical choice of architect when Child was carrying out further improvements. The absence of necessary evidence, however, means that such a theory must remain speculative.

Although other, smaller, additions were made to the landscape during John Child's ownership, the grotto-boathouse and the temple are the only features for

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<sup>79</sup> Corporation of London, 'The Temple: Wanstead Park' (London, 1997).

<sup>80</sup> Hoares Bank Archive, Ledger 54/440, John Child 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, February 1757–December 1793. Hereafter HBA; Jeffery, *Gardens of Wanstead*, p.32.

<sup>81</sup> R. White, 'Vardy, John (1717/18–1765)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28112](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28112), accessed 14 November 2014.



which we have substantial evidence.<sup>82</sup> They are important structures, demonstrating the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl's awareness of developments in landscape design in England, even whilst in Italy, and his efforts to demonstrate some level of involvement in the estate, albeit minor. The grotto-boathouse and the temple are aesthetically contrasting, yet closely interrelated structures, which responded to contemporary debates regarding the role of art in nature, and the demand for variety in estate landscapes. Although Child was absent from Wanstead for considerable periods of time, the introduction of these features ensured that the estate maintained its status as a site of significance.

#### **James Tylney Long of Draycot Cerne, Wiltshire (1774-1784)**

In his will of 1784, John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, requested that, 'if I die in England... I may be buried in my Family Vault at Wanstead and I direct that my Funeral may be private and with no more expense than decency requires'.<sup>83</sup> Child died, however, in Naples, on 17<sup>th</sup> September that year. Only his heart was returned to England, now kept in the crypt of St Mary's church at Wanstead. In the absence of any children of his own, John bequeathed his estates to his nephew, James Tylney Long, who had stayed with him whilst travelling through Italy during the 1760s.

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<sup>82</sup> Evidence of a Chinese temple at Wanstead for example is provided by contemporary poetry. See: 'Written in Earl Tilney's Chinese Temple, at Wanstead', *London Magazine, or, Gentleman's monthly intelligencer* (January 1764), p.44. As there is little other evidence for this feature, it has not been included in the overall discussion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl's landscape improvements at Wanstead; John Child 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney is also likely to have added a number of objects into the landscape such as classical statues and urns. For references to these features see: 'A Description of WANSTEAD HOUSE IN ESSEX, the Seat of the late Earl of TILNEY', *New London Magazine, 1785-1789* (April 1789), p.11.

<sup>83</sup> ERO D/DQS/12, Will of John 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney.

Despite their geographical separation, James seems to have had a close relationship with his uncle. Following the death of Sir Robert Long in 1767, it appears that James took on his father's role of regularly updating Child on estate affairs back home.<sup>84</sup> In 1775, John Child wrote to James from Florence, discussing local politics and the tenancy of Tylney hall, another manor he owned in Hampshire.<sup>85</sup> Regarding a dispute with a tenant named Mr Ellis, Child advised; 'the terms of years and proposals to be made to Mr Ellis I shall leave entirely at your Disposal, who is better able to judge of the Matter than I can be and who I am sure will reflect justly before you decide anything'.<sup>86</sup>

Child appears to have placed the same level of trust in James's ability to make decisions as he had in Sir Robert's. When John died, Dr Samuel Glasses wrote to his nephew about the loss of his 'noble patron'; 'this event which I hope has put you in ----- possession of all that you had so much reason to expect...That such accession may be understood, To be a larger measure of doing good. I have not the least doubt that this will prove the case.'<sup>87</sup> In 1768, Peirce Dod wrote to James, stating: 'I am far from thinking that you ever did or ever will attempt to serve any person but in good cause...your sentiments of acting are perfectly right and are every way worthy of that good and noble line from thro' which you

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<sup>84</sup> See correspondence between James and his father Sir Robert Long, during James's residence in Italy: WSHC 947/2117, 947/2116. See also correspondence between James Tylney Long and John Child, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney, WSHC 947/2121, John 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tylney to Sir James Tylney Long, Florence, 24 October 1775.

<sup>85</sup> Tylney Hall, referred to in chapter one of this thesis, belonged to Richard Child's first wife, Dorothy, daughter of John Gylne.

<sup>86</sup> WSHC 947/2121.

<sup>87</sup> WSHC 947/2112, Dr Samuel Glasses to James Tylney Long, 23 and 26 October 1784.

are descended.’<sup>88</sup> Such character descriptions indicate that contemporaries perceived James Tylney Long as worthy of his inheritance and ownership of the Tylney estates; as a generous and noble man.

Whilst he had taken great care in helping his uncle with his affairs at Wanstead, James himself does not seem to have aspired towards the grand lifestyle associated with that estate. The obituary published in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1794 describes James Tylney Long as a man who ‘felt very little relish for the gay and splendid scenes of what is called high life’.<sup>89</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that, upon his inheritance, he chose to remain at the more humble family residence, Draycot Cerne in Wiltshire.

In addition, Tylney Long would have been nearly fifty years of age when he inherited Wanstead and, according to *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, ‘his great accession of fortune a few years before his death...certainly made no addition to his happiness’.<sup>90</sup> By this time, he had an established reputation as a charitable benefactor and a ‘generous promoter of both public and private charities...volumes might be filled in describing his benevolence’.<sup>91</sup> In November 1806, *The Ladies Monthly Museum* recalled him as a ‘patron of the distressed...a universal friend of mankind’.<sup>92</sup> The article also noted that

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<sup>88</sup> WSHC 947/2112.

<sup>89</sup> *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (28 November 1794), p.1154.

<sup>90</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine*, p.1154.

<sup>91</sup> O. Barry, *The Lady Victoria Tylney Long Wellesley, A Memoir by her eldest God-daughter* (London, 1899), p.24.

<sup>92</sup> ‘LADY CATHERINE LONG’ *The Lady’s Monthly Museum, or Polite repository of amusement and instruction: being an assemblage of whatever can tend to please the fancy,*

inhabitants of the Tylney estates in Essex, Hertfordshire and Wiltshire would ‘all gratefully bear testimony to their noble possessor’s worth’.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that, despite his decision not to reside at Wanstead, James nonetheless fulfilled his landlord duties, presumably making regular visits to the estate.

Furthermore, respect for James in the locality of Wanstead is likely to have been fuelled by his joint commissioning, with George Bowles of Wanstead Grove, of architect Thomas Hardwick to design a new parish church between 1787 and 1790 (figs 134 and 135).<sup>94</sup> The church serves as testament to Tylney Long’s support of the estate community rather than the extravagant estate lifestyle (an approach not shared by some of Wanstead’s owners). A sketch by J.M.W. Turner, who worked as an assistant to Hardwick, shows that it is one of the few fragments of eighteenth-century Wanstead that survives intact (figs 136 and 137).<sup>95</sup>

Lawrence and Jeanne Stone argued that it was not uncommon for those who inherited a large property late in life to decide against relocating, perhaps having become too attached to the house in which they had first settled.<sup>96</sup> *The*

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*interest the mind, or exalt the character of the British fair / By a society of ladies, 1798-1828* (London 1806), p.197.

<sup>93</sup> ‘LADY CATHERINE LONG’, p.197.

<sup>94</sup> H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (London and New Haven, 2008), p.481. N. Pevsner, B. Cherry and C. O’Brien, *The Buildings of England: London 5: East* (London and New Haven, 2005), pp.355-356.

<sup>95</sup> Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*, p.481; A. Wilton, ‘Wanstead New Church 1789-90 by Joseph Mallord William Turner’, in *J.M.W Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours*, ed. D. Blayney (London, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540- 1880* (Oxford, 1984), p.112.

*Gentleman's Magazine's* obituary comments that James was 'accustomed from principle and from virtuous habits to live within the bounds of his paternal income', suggesting that he was not a gentleman who let wealth get the better of him.<sup>97</sup> He may also, in part, have chosen to maintain Draycot as his permanent family home due to the relative lack of domestic comfort available at such a grand mansion as Wanstead. Alexander Pope famously remarked on his visit to Blenheim Palace: 'Thanks sir, cried I, tis' very fine, But where d'ye sleep, or where d'ye dine? I find, by all you have been telling, That tis a house but not a dwelling.'<sup>98</sup> Judith Lewis's discussion of elite women and country houses has highlighted the challenges of trying to make a 'home' in such a large country house, and she recognises that men, too, could have difficulty in bonding with the more palatial of these environments.<sup>99</sup> Country houses such as Blenheim, built as a reward for the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Marlborough's military triumphs, could be better considered as monuments and political centres, rather than homes *per se*.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, when James Tylney Long inherited Wanstead, many of the objects and portraits in this huge mansion belonged to previous generations, and were intended for grand public show. Lewis notes that the significant amount of space that could be dedicated to the performance of public duty and the display

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<sup>97</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, p.1154.

<sup>98</sup> J.S Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 2009), p.336.

<sup>99</sup> Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home', pp.336-363.

<sup>100</sup> For literature on Blenheim Palace as a monument see: J. Legard, 'Queen Anne, Court Culture and the Construction of Blenheim Palace', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (June 2014), pp.185-197.

of lineage in these great houses, as opposed to more familial and private needs, could hinder the development of personal and emotional attachments.<sup>101</sup>

No notable amendments at Wanstead were carried out during the period of James's ownership, aside from the rebuilding of the church. As a result, this discussion of Wanstead during his tenure is brief. It is primarily of significance as reinforcing the analysis provided by Lewis about comfort and the country house, showing that some members of the elite who came into major inheritances did not aspire to a grand lifestyle, and actively sought more humble existences.

#### **William and Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley (1812-1824)**

James Tylney Long died in 1794 and, as instructed in his will, the estate passed to his only son and namesake. The young James, however, died in 1805, aged just eleven. Without any other male heirs, Catherine, the eldest of James's three daughters, was next in line to inherit the family fortune and estates. Stone noted that the suitors of such an heiress would often be subject to the suspicion that their motivations were mercenary, rather than affective.<sup>102</sup> As this section will explore, Catherine's choice of husband was indeed a fraught business, and had a considerable impact on the future of Wanstead. As a result of her marriage, she became the final owner of the estate, prior to its demolition in 1824.

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<sup>101</sup> Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home', pp.341-342.

<sup>102</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?* p.122.

Until Catherine came of age, Wanstead was under the care of trustees well-known to the family: Thomas Phipps and William Bullock. Phipps was the father-in-law of Catherine's uncle, Charles Long of Grittleton, and he had taken care of the Long and Phipps family trust settlements since his daughter Hannah's marriage to Charles in 1771.<sup>103</sup> Bullock's family had connections with the Child family extending as far back as the late seventeenth century, when Edward Bullock had married Josiah Child's daughter, Mary.<sup>104</sup>

In 1802, these trustees leased the estate to Prince de la Condé, who, like many French aristocrats such as the Duc d'Orléans, the Duc de Motpensier and the Comte de Beaujolais, sought refuge from the political turmoil in France. He remained at Wanstead until about 1807.<sup>105</sup> Wanstead's proximity to London seems to have contributed to its appeal for this wealthy foreign tenant. London

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<sup>103</sup> J. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland. Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank*, 4 vols (London, 1836) III, p.218.

<sup>104</sup> E.Cruikshank, S.Handley and D.W Hayton ed., *The House of Commons 1690-1715*, (Cambridge, 2002), p.199.

<sup>105</sup> Evidence that the Prince de la Condé was resident at Wanstead can be found in a letter written by the Prince to Princess Louise Adelaide in 1802, describing Wanstead and the grounds. See: C. Sevelinges, ed. *Conde, Memoires de la maison de Condé imprimes sur les manuscrits autographes et d'apres l'autoprisation de S.A.S Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon: contenant la vie du Grand Condé, écrite par feu Mgr.le prince de Condé, la correspondance de ce prince avec tous les souverains et princes des familles royales de l'Europe, depuis 1789, jusqu'en 1814*, 2 vols (Madison, 2010), II. Thanks to Richard Arnopp for a transcript of this correspondence. The obituary for the Prince de la Condé, Duke of Bourbon, refers to a letter written by the Prince whilst at Wanstead to Altesse Sérénissime Madame la Princesse Louise de Condé, Feb 3 1805. See: J. Bowyer, Nichols, ed., 'Obituary – The Duke of Bourbon' *The Gentleman's Magazine: and historical chronicle* (September 1830), pp.271-273; W and R. Chambers, 'The last of the Condés', *Chambers Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*, No. 421 (25 January 1862), pp.56-59; L. Winter, 'The Lovely Miss Long', *Longman's Magazine 1820-1905* (July 1905), pp.213-222; Stead, p.62 and p.98.

was arguably the largest, richest and most fashionable city in Europe at the time, and the British Government was keen to support the restoration of the Bourbons in order to ensure peace across Europe. The lure of British pensions, and Britain's safety from French invasions, drew numerous members of the French aristocracy.<sup>106</sup>

In 1804, a French royalist, Madame de Lage, commented on Condé's residence in Essex: 'His household is maintained and organized marvellously, it is still the household of a prince: it has dignity.'<sup>107</sup> Two years earlier, in 1802, however, the Prince himself had commented on Wanstead rather differently in a letter to Princess Louise de Condé. In this, he describes the rooms as 'decorated in old-fashioned style, and...never used, even though they are richly furnished'.<sup>108</sup> Condé here engages with the fact that, even though this was a mansion still appropriate for accommodating a member of the French royalty, Wanstead had become somewhat outdated, and was suffering from underuse, due to the two previous ownerships.

#### 'The Lovely Miss Long': Catherine as heiress<sup>109</sup>

Catherine's status as an heiress attracted numerous suitors. The lucrative estates belonging to her family were well known, as was the fact that both her father and brother had already passed away. Wanstead was to come immediately into

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<sup>106</sup> P. Mansel, 'Courts in exile: Bourbons, Bonapartes and Orleans in London, from George III to Edward VII' in D. Kelly and M. Cornick eds, *A history of the French in London: liberty, equality, opportunity* (London, 2013), p.107.

<sup>107</sup> Mansel, 'Courts in exile', p.107.

<sup>108</sup> *Memoires de la maison de Condé*, passim.

<sup>109</sup> Winter, 'Lovely Miss Long', p.213.



her possession, once she came of age. In the meantime, Catherine spent a considerable amount of time in London, attending balls and other social events. The competition amongst potential husbands seems to have been fierce, and was widely discussed. Lady Charlotte Bury bemoaned this rivalry, and evoked the name of Hymen, Greek God of marriage, in wishing;

that she [Miss Long] were fairly married, for all this pother gives on a disgusting picture of human nature. Avarice in children is shocking, yet the united schools of Eton and Westminster are gaping after this girl as if she fairer than a myriad of Venuses.<sup>110</sup>

Two satirical prints illustrate this competition amongst suitors for Miss Tylney Long's hand. *Princely Piety, or the Worshippers at Wanstead*, by George Cruickshank, dates from 1811, and it depicts Catherine seated at the top of a flight of steps, surrounded by grotesque-looking suitors (fig. 138).<sup>111</sup> Cruickshank has coloured Catherine yellow, to represent gold, and, on either side, large, florid cornucopias disgorge guineas. Surrounding her are Romeo Coates, Sir Lumley St George Skeffington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet, the Baron de Geramb, and, most notably, the Duke of Clarence. The Duke of Clarence's determination to marry Catherine is again the subject of satire in *The R----- L LOVER, OR, THE ADMIRAL ON A LEE SHORE*, by William Heath, published in 1812 (fig. 139).<sup>112</sup> The map hanging in this classical interior is inscribed 'TILNEY

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<sup>110</sup> Winter, 'Lovely Miss Long', pp.213-222.

<sup>111</sup> British Museum Prints and Drawings Department, 1865,1111.2061. Hereafter BM; M.D George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Dept. of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, 11 vols (London, 1978) IX, no.11744, pp.34-36.

<sup>112</sup> See: BM 1868,0808.12649; George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, No.11844, p.82.

ESTATE', a reminder of Catherine's fortunes. In 1830, the Duke was to become King William IV. It is tempting to reflect upon how different the future of Wanstead might have been, had Catherine accepted one of his numerous offers of marriage.<sup>113</sup>

However, by the time *The R----- L LOVER* was published, Catherine had agreed to a marriage proposal from William Wellesley Pole, son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Mornington, and the Duke of Wellington's nephew. Like the Duke of Clarence, William had proposed to Catherine on a number of occasions prior to her acceptance.<sup>114</sup> Catherine's hesitation over the decision to marry William was probably due to his widespread reputation as a reckless 'dandy' and a 'very ill-conducted and...not a very wise man'.<sup>115</sup> William's involvement in a public scandal with Lord Kilworth, which led to a duel over Catherine, for example, was the subject of much gossip.<sup>116</sup> It is therefore of little surprise that Catherine's relatives seem to have been more in favour of the Duke of Clarence's pursuit of the heiress.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> M. Brock, 'William IV (1765 – 1837)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29451](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29451), accessed 10 February 2015.

<sup>114</sup> Evidence of the competition between the Duke of Clarence and William Wellesley Pole can be noted in a collection of correspondence between the Duke of Clarence and Catherine's aunt. See: WSHC 2246, William IV – photocopies and transcripts of letters written by Duke of Clarence (William IV) during courtship.

<sup>115</sup> ERO T/B 39 W.H.L; Stead, p.25.

<sup>116</sup> Stead, p.64.

<sup>117</sup> Correspondence between the Duke of Clarence and Catherine's aunt suggests there was a good relationship between the duke and Catherine's family. See: WSHC 2246.

Nonetheless, Catherine accepted William's proposal and, upon the announcement of their engagement, she received many letters of congratulations.<sup>118</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> November 1811, William's aunt wrote to her;

how delighted I am at the prospect of our near connection... I know him to have the best of dispositions and an excellent heart and I most sincerely hope and believe that he will make you happy and prove himself worth of the honour you have conferred upon him.<sup>119</sup>

William received similar good wishes. Dr. George Sables, for example, wrote: 'I think Miss Long could not have made a better choice, for am convinced you are too honourable a man not to make her the best of husbands.'<sup>120</sup> Catherine and William were married at St James's Church in Piccadilly, London, in March 1812. The crowds gathered were so enormous that the couple had to exit the church through the side entrance onto Jermyn Street, in order to make their escape, reportedly spending the night at Wellesley's family chateau in Blackheath, before proceeding to Wanstead the following day.<sup>121</sup>

Although well connected, William did not have any substantial family wealth and this is likely to have caused concern that his interest in Catherine was primarily mercenary. Certainly, efforts were made to ensure the protection of her assets at the time of the couple's engagement. One newspaper account reported:

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<sup>118</sup> For congratulatory correspondence see RCL Box 4, Vol. 1, Letter Nos.1-13.

<sup>119</sup> ERO TA/404, Letter to Miss Catherine, from Oatlands, 24 November 1811.

<sup>120</sup> ERO TA/404.

<sup>121</sup> 'INCIDENTS OCCURRING IN AND NEAR LONDON, INTERESTING MARRIAGES, &c.', *La Belle Assemblée: or Court and fashionable magazine* (March 1812), pp.164-166.

‘The rolls of parchment employed in preparing the marriage articles conveyances, and other deeds, in preparation for the expected union of Miss Tylney Long and Mr. Wellesley Pole, are sufficiently numerous and bulk to load a cart.’<sup>122</sup>

As Habakkuk explored, estates were often settled on terms that made it difficult to raise money on them. Strict settlements, for example, were designed to protect property by ensuring that individuals were made occupiers, rather than outright owners.<sup>123</sup> Although William was marrying Catherine, he would thus never have the right to claim her family estates as his own. Such estates were generally secured for the heiress’s son. This principle underpins William’s adoption of the family arms and ‘Tylney Long’ as an additional surname, the result of one of the many conditions laid down in the marriage contract.<sup>124</sup> Stone has noted that the practice of adopting surnames came into practice during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries amongst the nouveaux riche, when marrying their daughters and heiresses into an impoverished family elite.<sup>125</sup> The practice of hyphenating a family surname showed that the ancient line had been rescued by a new family.<sup>126</sup> Hyphenation was considered a compromise, which did not eradicate either bloodline. Although the Pole Tylney Long Wellesley surname was not hyphenated as such, it nonetheless carried the same meaning, so that future heirs or heiresses would continue to carry the family name and maintain the original Tylney ties to the estate.

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<sup>122</sup> Stead, p.64

<sup>123</sup> J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System* (Oxford, 1994), p.243.

<sup>124</sup> Barry, *Lady Victoria*, p.32.

<sup>125</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p.80.

<sup>126</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p.81.

Catherine's marriage settlement, arranged in 1812, thus limited William's role to life tenancy only, stating that the Tylney estates would pass to any children the married couple had.<sup>127</sup> Had the Wanstead estate survived, Catherine's first son, William Richard Arthur Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, would have been able to take up his rightful inheritance, maintaining his father's name whilst also being clearly positioned in the Tylney line. The marriage settlement also noted that Catherine was entitled to two sums of £5,000 from her father's will and her marriage portion, in addition to £7,700 per quarter as pin money for her independent income. This was intended for;

the separate use and benefit of Catherine Tylney Long, independently and exclusively of William Wellesley Pole and without being in anywise subject to his debts, control, interference or engagement and the same to be at the absolute disposal of Catherine Tylney Long.<sup>128</sup>

Such restrictions were common practice.

### Reviving and Preserving the Wanstead Interior

Prior to her marriage to William, Catherine had already undertaken the all-important and demanding task of restoring and reviving the rather neglected house at Wanstead. Amanda Vickery has noted that there were typical moments which prompted rebuilding or redecoration: marriage; inheritance; a sudden windfall or social promotion; expansion of the family; the launching of children

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<sup>127</sup> WSHC 2062/4, Settlement giving Miss Catherine Tylney Long an independent income after marriage.

<sup>128</sup> WSHC 2062/4.

onto the marriage market.<sup>129</sup> Catherine's status as a highly eligible heiress, and her much anticipated marriage, meant that she needed an appropriate setting in which to display her status, and to provide entertainments such the 'splendid dejune' held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1811.<sup>130</sup> Although a significant amount of improvement to Wanstead did occur after her marriage in 1812, Catherine's earlier efforts to restore the interior of the family seat indicates her concern for hospitality and display, as well as her desire to preserve the family's heirlooms.<sup>131</sup>

In light of the absence of any permanent resident owner at Wanstead over the previous fifty years, improvements to the interior were crucial at this time. In a letter dating 18<sup>th</sup> October 1810, Bullock writes to Catherine at length about the progress of the restoration work being undertaken:

The workmen here are going on with the Painting and other Works, as well as we could expect. They have nearly finished what was to be done upstairs, and as I think, in a Workman like manner: and they will proceed with the Ground Floor as fast as possible...the upper storey has been much the most troublesome and tedious – on account of the Ceiling and other carved work – I have not suffered them to do anything

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<sup>129</sup> A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2010), p.88

<sup>130</sup> *Morning Chronicle* (2 July 1811).

<sup>131</sup> For literature on retaining and introducing new furnishing into the eighteenth-century country house see: J. Stobart and M. Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritance and Family: New and Old in the Georgian Country House', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2014), pp. 385-406; J. Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1717-1819', *Regional Furniture*, Vol. 27 (2013), pp.1-43.

to the Great Hall, upstairs, until you see it again, as I think more must be done to it than we talked of – and it will be as well to leave it till the last.<sup>132</sup>

Bullock's comments refer to William Kent's ceiling in the Great Hall, discussed in chapter three. This painting by a leading designer of the Georgian period was clearly a prized feature, and its restoration was important in the attempt to revive the original splendour of Wanstead. In February 1811, Bullock once again updated the heiress on the progress of work on the ceiling, ensuring her that 'no time will be lost in getting it completed'. With her impending marriage, finishing the project was urgent.<sup>133</sup>

Bullock's correspondence is highly significant. Much of this study of Wanstead has, necessarily, been focused upon male ownership. However, Catherine's engagement in the business of restoring Wanstead, prior to her marriage, supports arguments by Judith Lewis and Dana Arnold that women could often be heavily involved in the development and furnishing of family seats. This can be overlooked in country-house studies, which can marginalise women who played key roles in commissioning, patronising and purchasing.<sup>134</sup>

Despite the developments subsequently undertaken by Catherine and William, appreciation for the older furnishings and decoration at the house endured, right up until the sales of 1822. Lot 4 on the thirteenth day of the June sale, and lot 3

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<sup>132</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4, Bullock to Miss Tylney Long, From Wanstead House, 18 October 1810.

<sup>133</sup> BL Add MS 52483, f.112, Bullock to Catherine at Draycot House, letter 2, February 1811.

<sup>134</sup> Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home', pp.336-363; D. Arnold, 'Defining Femininity: Women and the Country House' in *The Georgian Country House*, ed. D. Arnold (Sutton, 1998), pp.79-99.

on the sixteenth day, for example, were those luxurious Axminster carpets from the ballroom.<sup>135</sup> These were the floor coverings recorded so much earlier in Hogarth's portrait. They are also listed in the 1795 inventory, indicating that they remained in situ from the early eighteenth century onwards. Their featuring in the sale, and their relatively high pricing, demonstrates that items that might potentially be considered 'old fashioned' in the interior of Wanstead were still, in fact, highly valued.<sup>136</sup> The collection of furniture designed by William Kent in the 1730s, bearing the family's coat of arms, was similarly still prized. This remained at Wanstead throughout the eighteenth century, and Catherine's ownership of the property. As with the restoration work on the ceiling, the retention and maintenance of these original furnishings helped to underscore the fact that, despite long periods of neglect, the estate had remained within the same family. Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery have commented that the survival of older furnishings under a new ownership could help to reinforce the role of the country house as a symbol of dynastic heritage, longevity and inherited wealth.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, the subsequent purchase of this furniture by buyers such as the Earl of Pembroke at the 1822 sale indicates the on-going wider appreciation of Kent's work in the early nineteenth century.

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<sup>135</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, no.29, lot 4; *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, no. 35, lot.3.

<sup>136</sup> Lot 3, '*An excellent crimson-ground Axminster Carpet*' in the Grand Saloon on day 16 sold for £52,10. According to National Archives currency converter this would have the same spending worth of 2005's £2,200.80. Lot 4 '*An excellent crimson-ground AXMINSTER CARPET*' in the Grand Ball Room sold for £34,2,6. According to National Archives currency converter this would have the same spending worth of 2005's £1,430.52.

<sup>137</sup> Stobart and Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family', p.393.



In the remainder of this chapter, I will address improvements carried out at Wanstead, following William and Catherine's occupation in 1812. Aside from John Child's addition of the grotto-boathouse and the temple, no major work had been carried out to either the interior or the landscape since Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney's death in 1750. As a result, it is unsurprising that William joined Catherine in continuing work on new initiatives and commissions: 'Within a little month of his marriage, while it might have been expected that the defendant [Wellesley] would have been far differently amused, he began to new model all the household.'<sup>138</sup> These improvements included new additions to the interior furnishings of the house, and the employment of the landscape designers Humphry Repton (in 1813) and Lewis Kennedy (in 1818).

Although William was, as I have noted, restricted in how much power he could exercise over Catherine and her family estates, he nonetheless appears to have played a major part in these improvements. Repton addressed his proposals for a new landscape at Wanstead to Wellesley, as well as personal correspondence regarding these designs.<sup>139</sup> Lewis Kennedy likewise addressed his proposals for an American Garden at Wanstead to Wellesley, although he did also recognise Catherine's involvement in the scheme: 'I therefore submit this drawing in the vignette for your selection of that which you or Mrs Wellesley's good taste may think proper to adopt.'<sup>140</sup> However, whilst the extent of Catherine's engagement with work on the estate during this period is unclear, her ultimate authority over

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<sup>138</sup> 'Interesting Trial', *The Weekly Entertainer: or, Agreeable and instructive repository* (22 April 1813), p.293.

<sup>139</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.1.

<sup>140</sup> PGL, L. Kennedy, *Nottiae on American Gardens, Wanstead, Essex* (1818). Thanks to Bryan Maggs for allowing me access to this material.

the property makes it most likely work was agreed between the couple. Following chronology, I will first address the landscape improvements carried out by Repton and Kennedy, before moving onto a discussion of those undertaken in the interior of the house.

### Humphry Repton's Designs

Soon after William and Catherine had settled at Wanstead in 1812, they employed Humphry Repton to carry out improvements to the estate landscape. Repton was an obvious candidate for employment at Wanstead because, by the late eighteenth century, he had become the leading landscape designer of the period, and had been responsible for major improvements on significant estates such as Holkham (1789), Wentworth Woodhouse (1790) and Harewood (1799). He had also published a number of influential publications, such as *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1794), *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1803), *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening* (1806), and *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816).<sup>141</sup>

According to notes made in his report on Wanstead, submitted in September 1813, Repton made his first visit to the estate in April of that year.<sup>142</sup> Whilst having already undertaken a wealth of commissions earlier in his career, Wanstead was nonetheless of great importance to Repton at this time. The

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<sup>141</sup> See: H. Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (London, 1794); H. Repton, *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (London, 1803); H. Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening* (London, 1806); H. Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practise of Landscape Gardening* (London, 1816).

<sup>142</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.1.

designer was suffering from a steep decline in major commissions from aristocratic patrons by this period, which, he believed, was a result of the Napoleonic wars, taxes and inflation.<sup>143</sup> Although the Marquess of Bath at Longleat and the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey had employed Repton in 1804, the majority of his commissions during the early nineteenth century were fairly modest.<sup>144</sup> Stephen Daniels thus describes the years between 1806 and 1816 as a troubled period for Repton and notes that, in 1810, he received just three commissions.<sup>145</sup> In January 1811, Repton's career had further been blighted by a carriage accident that had damaged his spine and confined him to a wheelchair for the remainder of his life. It is thus not surprising that, when Repton was invited to improve Wanstead, he enthusiastically accepted, no doubt hoping that such a commission would revive his flagging career.

A fundamental aspect of Repton's practice was his production of watercolour views depicting 'before' and 'after' scenes. These views would be accompanied by text outlining his proposals, bound together in red morocco. Named on account of their presentation, the 'Red Books' became highly regarded as luxury commodities in their own right. Extracts from these proposals for various country houses were frequently included in his published treatises on landscape design. The title page for his 1816 publication, *Fragments on the Theory and*

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<sup>143</sup> S. Daniels, 'Repton, Humphry (1752–1818)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23387](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23387), accessed 6 February 2015.

<sup>144</sup> Daniels, 'Repton, Humphry'; See also gazetteer in S. Daniels, *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (London and New Haven, 1999), pp.255–270.

<sup>145</sup> S. Daniels, 'Cankorous Blossom: Troubles in the Later Career of Humphry Repton', *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1986), p.147.

*Practice of Landscape Improvements*, thus states that the ideas put forward were ‘collected from various manuscripts in the possession of the different noblemen and gentlemen for whose use they were originally written’.<sup>146</sup> Such publications helped to provide a public platform from which Repton could exhibit his latest designs and ideas.

William, however, declined the opportunity to have a Red Book for Wanstead, a significant blow for the designer: ‘I must confess I am a little mortified that it should be your wish not to have it seen, because it is a subject I am not a little vain of.’<sup>147</sup> The production of one of these publications devoted to Wanstead would have allowed Repton to include his designs for the property in detail in his next publication, advertising his return to the kind of aristocratic commission on which he had established his career.<sup>148</sup> Instead, Repton could only include a small selection of his proposals for Wanstead in *Fragments*, under the generic heading: ‘A place near the Capital’.<sup>149</sup> However, although Repton did not directly refer to Wanstead in his description, the views included would have been instantly recognisable to those familiar with what was described as ‘one of the most magnificent places in this country’.<sup>150</sup> It is not clear why William declined to have a Red Book, but it is probably significant that the production of one of these books was an additional expense, prepared only once payment for it

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<sup>146</sup> Repton, *Fragments*, frontispiece.

<sup>147</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.252.

<sup>148</sup> A. Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste: The Art of Humphry Repton's Red Books* (London, 2007), p.26.

<sup>149</sup> Repton, *Fragments*, pp.129-136.

<sup>150</sup> Repton, *Fragments*, p.129.

had been guaranteed.<sup>151</sup> This suggests, therefore, a certain lack of commitment, and hints at the financial restrictions already facing Wanstead's new owners.

The views of and commentary for Wanstead formed Repton's initial report, its pages still unbound at the 1822 sale.<sup>152</sup> It has fortunately survived, although, as with all these sources, one must be cautious when drawing on the proposals as historical evidence. The existence of designs for Wanstead does not, of course, mean that all or indeed any of the suggested improvements were actually carried out. However, there is evidence to suggest that at least some of these proposals were implemented. John Dooley's 1815-16 survey of the estate does depict the four parterres proposed in Repton's view to the west (figs 140 and 141). Further evidence for the actual creation of these parterres can also be found in archaeological research into the current landscape (fig. 142). However, even if that was the extent of the implementation of Repton's designs, his report on Wanstead still offers considerable insight into how the estate appeared at the time of William and Catherine's arrival. It is also useful to see how Repton's proposed changes engaged with contemporary trends and debates in landscape design.

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<sup>151</sup> Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste*, p.48.

<sup>152</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 23, lot.447 'Repton's Drawings of Plans for Improving the Grounds at Wanstead House (15); a Portfolio, containing five Drawings for Clocks and Stands – in all 3.' The brown binding which currently contains the report was a later addition. In 2002, Bryan Maggs acquired the Wanstead report for the Sir Paul Getty Library at the Wormsley Estate, Buckinghamshire. Although the report was undervalued at £1000-2000, it was purchased for £58,000. See: I. McKay, 'Repton 'Red Book' for a vanished country house sells for £58,000 in Sussex', *Antiques Trade Gazette* (9 February 2002), p.45; S. Jeffery, 'How Repton saw Wanstead', *Country Life Magazine* (14 April 2005), pp.98-101.

### Humphry Repton and the Picturesque Debate

In order better to understand Repton's proposals for Wanstead, it is worth reflecting on the debates in landscape design that had occurred prior to his employment by William and Catherine. When establishing himself as a designer, English landscapes were dominated by the work of his predecessor, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783), who had radically transformed the geometric gardens of the early eighteenth century in favour of more 'natural' appearing grounds.<sup>153</sup> Dorothy Stroud states that, although Brown had some imitators after his death, such as Richard Woods in Essex, and a 'Mr Eames' who worked at Chirck Castle, Baron Hill and Cuffnells, there had been no outstanding figure to assume Brown's role.<sup>154</sup> In 1788, Repton wrote to his friend, Reverend Norton Nicholls, announcing his intentions to become the next leading landscape designer, and he commented that 'the works of Kent, Brown and Richmond have been the places of my worship'.<sup>155</sup> Repton frequently described Brown as his 'predecessor', calling him 'a truly great man' and a 'genius', making his admiration clear.<sup>156</sup>

Repton's appreciation for Brown's landscapes however, proved problematic for some of his contemporaries. Whilst the fashion for the Brownian style had been

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<sup>153</sup> For literature on Brown see: J. Phibbs, 'Brown, Lancelot [Capability Brown] (*bap.* 1716, *d.* 1783)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3635](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3635), accessed 14 May 2016; D. Stroud, *Capability Brown* (London, 1950); J. Brown, *The omnipotent magician: Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, 1716-1783* (London, 2001); R. Turner, *Capability Brown: and the eighteenth-century English landscape* (London, 1985); T. Hinde, *Capability Brown: the story of a master gardener* (London, 1986).

<sup>154</sup> D. Stroud, *Humphry Repton* (London, 1962), p.27.

<sup>155</sup> Stroud, *Humphry Repton*, p.27.

<sup>156</sup> Stroud, *Humphry Repton*, p.28; Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, p. xiv.

widely popular during the late eighteenth century, it had given rise to debate. Despite his intentions to create natural spaces, Brown's landscapes, and those of his imitators, were criticised for being, in fact, highly *unnatural* by supporters of the picturesque movement, such as William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price.<sup>157</sup> Knight and Price had argued that estate landscapes should imitate the principles laid out in Italian landscape paintings by Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa, and that those by Brown were at variance with this; 'nothing can be more at war with all these principles (sounded as they are in truth and in nature) than the present system of laying out grounds'.<sup>158</sup> Repton's early commissions, in particular that at Tatton Park in Cheshire in 1791, showed Brown's influence, and so came under fire in Knight's 1795 publication, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem*:

He therefore leads you many a tedious round,  
To shew the extent of his employers ground,  
Climb over the hills, and to the vales descends,  
Then mounts again, through lawn that never ends.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> For literature on the picturesque debate see: H. Fryer, 'Humphry Repton's Commissions in Herefordshire: Picturesque Landscape Aesthetics', *Garden History*, Vol.22, No. 2 (Winter, 1994), pp.162-174; S. Daniels, 'The Picturesque Landscape' in *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (London and New Haven, 1999), pp.103–147; Daniels, 'Repton, Humphry'; T. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1995), pp.141-159.

<sup>158</sup> See: R. P Knight, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem in three books addressed to Uvedale Price Esq.* (London, 1795); U. Price, *A letter to Humphry Repton, Esq. On the application of the practice as well as the principles of Landscape Gardening* (Hereford, 1798).

<sup>159</sup> Knight, *The Landscape*, p.13.

Daniels describes Repton, a great self-publicist, as extremely sensitive about his reputation.<sup>160</sup> His decision to publish his ideas on landscape design shows him actively entering this combative arena of debate. Repton's first publication, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, was delayed by a year so, to allow him to respond to the attacks;

the publication of a didactic poem where much is said on that subject, under the sanction and authority of two gentlemen of acknowledged taste, obliges me to defend not only my own principles and the reputation of my late predecessor, Mr Brown, but also the art itself from attacks which are the more dangerous from the manner in which they are conveyed.<sup>161</sup>

That year, Repton also published a letter to Price, claiming that he did also value the principles of the picturesque: 'During the pleasant hours we passed together amongst the romantic scenery of the Wye, I do remember my acknowledging that an enthusiasm for the picturesque, had originally led me to fancy greater affinity betwixt Painting and Gardening.'<sup>162</sup>

Repton's desire for a 'greater affinity betwixt Painting and Gardening' is crucial to understanding how he differed from Price and Knight. Indeed, Repton believed that the art of landscape gardening could only be perfected 'by the

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<sup>160</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.104; For publications which responded to the attacks made by Price and Knight see: H. Repton, *A letter to Uvedale Price, Esq.* (London, 1794); Repton, *Sketches and Hints*; Repton, *Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*.

<sup>161</sup> Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, p.48.

<sup>162</sup> Price, *Letter to Humphry Repton*, p.255; Repton, *Letter to Uvedale*, p.5.



united powers of the landscape painter and the practical gardener'.<sup>163</sup> Knight and Price, however, called for the wild, untamed scenes of landscape painting, but rejected the need for practical gardening skills and thus, in a sense, the idea of a controlled estate landscape. The picturesque principle was to eradicate signs of human intervention and habitation. Repton thus did not consider it appropriate for the setting of a country house. Instead, he argued that an estate landscape should be designed to be lived in, and to combine beauty and utility. This could not be achieved in the kind of rough, picturesque terrains praised by Knight and Price;

the most beautiful scenes in nature may surprize at first sight, or delight for a time, but they cannot long be interesting unless made habitable; therefore the whole Art of Landscape Gardening may properly be defined as the pleasing combination of Art and Nature adopted for the use of Man.<sup>164</sup>

Despite originally positioning himself as a follower and defender of Brown, Repton's published writings indicate a gradual shift away from some of the most Brownian techniques, such as bringing the lawn right up to the façade of the house. This departure from well-known Brownian principles is indicated in Repton's 1806 publication *An Enquiry into the changing taste of Landscape Gardening*, in which he comments on the disadvantages of modern gardening; 'the fashion of English gardening was in danger of becoming more tiresome, insipid and unnatural'.<sup>165</sup> It is therefore evident that Repton increasingly did not

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<sup>163</sup> Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, p.xiii.

<sup>164</sup> Repton, *Fragments*, p.xxvi.

<sup>165</sup> Repton, *Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, p.7.

perceive an entirely Brownian landscape as wholly appropriate for an estate landscape either;

Extremes are equally to be avoided; and I trust that the taste of this country will neither insipidly slide into the trammels of that smooth shaven “genius of the bare and bald,” which he [Knight] so justly ridicules; nor enlist under the banners of that shaggy and harsh-featured spirit, which knows no delight but in the scenes of Salvator Rosa; scenes of horror, well calculated for the residence of the banditti.<sup>166</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, the picturesque debate seems to have faded somewhat. Brown’s landscapes had become increasingly unpopular, and less of a matter for discussion and debate. Furthermore, as Repton noted, the impact of taxation and the Napoleonic Wars resulted in few landowners having the disposable income necessary for the improvement of their estates. This presumably resulted in a flagging interest in how landscapes ought to be composed. Moreover, Knight, one of Repton’s greatest critics, had retired to a modest cottage on his Downton Vale estate in Herefordshire, consequently removing himself from such public debates. Price did continue to publish writings on the picturesque and landscape gardening, but, by the time of the Wanstead commission, Repton seems to have largely overcome the dispute with a growing confidence in his own means of negotiating the relationship between art and nature.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Repton, *Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, p.135.

<sup>167</sup> For Price’s publications during this period see: U. Price, *Essays on the Picturesque* (London, 1810).

### The 'Ancient' and 'Modern' Style

Repton's designs for Wanstead show an approach to landscape design that sought a balance between the manmade garden and the natural world that Brown, Price and Knight valorised, albeit in different ways. This was achieved through a combination of two different styles, referred to throughout the report for Wanstead as the 'modern' and the 'ancient'. The 'modern' referred to the Brownian style, which, according to Repton, presented the natural landscape as 'the chief object to follow'.<sup>168</sup> Repton's awareness of the style's disadvantages is evident, however, in his use of Knight's description of 'endless serpentine'.<sup>169</sup> Repton also cautions that whilst nature was the chief object for the 'modern' style, it was not to be slavishly copied; 'she [nature] had furnished hints, not patterns to be imitated with exact servility'.<sup>170</sup> The 'ancient' style, meanwhile, derived from Le Notre's landscape at Versailles, made popular in England by London and Wise during the early eighteenth century.<sup>171</sup> Contrary to the 'modern' style, this method of landscaping was intended to display man's triumph over nature.<sup>172</sup>

Tom Williamson argues that Repton's evocation of the ancient style responded to a growing social anxiety about an increasingly polarized rural community and commercial society that had developed during the early nineteenth century, due to the Industrial Revolution and agrarian capitalism.<sup>173</sup> Harking back to the

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<sup>168</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.4.

<sup>169</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.4.

<sup>170</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.4.

<sup>171</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.3.

<sup>172</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.3.

<sup>173</sup> Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, p.156

‘ancient’ gardens that once surrounded the former manor houses of England, can be read as an attempt to return to a supposedly more stable and harmonious age, when the manor house served as the centre of the rural community.

Crucially, Repton refused to allow the Brownian style to dominate his designs for Wanstead. He claimed that restoring the true character of the landscape was more important than following the latest trends: ‘It is therefore an object worthy of consideration whether the original or the more recent Style be most advisable; and how far both may be admitted.’<sup>174</sup> As Wanstead’s landscape had undergone few alterations since the first half of the eighteenth century, it was furnished with ‘examples of the Geometric Style of Gardening’.<sup>175</sup> In his report, Repton writes to William: ‘I could not but rejoice at the instructions I received, that it is your wish not to destroy, but rather to preserve the original style of the place...I must congratulate you on the good taste displayed in such a wish.’<sup>176</sup> Not only was this economically more practical, but, to seek out the site’s original character was also, importantly, another means of negotiating recent debates around the role of art and nature in landscape gardening.<sup>177</sup>

Having provided the broader context for Repton’s proposals, my discussion will focus on the views made towards the west, east and south of Wanstead House. Consideration of the view towards the south will be incorporated into the discussion of the view towards the west, because they are closely related. Repton

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<sup>174</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.5.

<sup>175</sup> Repton, *Fragments*, p.129.

<sup>176</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.1.

<sup>177</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.5.

made these views from the portico, saloon and the ballroom, the most prized and public spaces of the house and thus my account effectively coincides with my discussion of the Wanstead interior in chapter two, demonstrating the on-going significance of these spaces during the early nineteenth century. I will address both the landscape as it existed at the time of Repton's employment, and the intentions behind the proposed changes.

### View to the West

Repton's view to the west was taken from the portico of Wanstead House and it depicts the open lawn immediately in front of the house (fig. 143). Repton describes the scene as 'unenliven'd by any moving objects', with paths on either side leading toward the basin shown in the anonymous view of gentlemen going out to hunt and Rocque's 1735 map (figs 22 and 27).<sup>178</sup> Across the basin, the paths connect and can be seen continuing into the far distance. Repton's view is, indeed, totally deserted. There are no visitors coming or going, and no livestock shown. The grounds situated at the front of the house had been largely unaltered since the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Tylney's death in 1750 and so the scene portrayed shows the landscape as created in the 1730s, when earlier geometric features of the garden had been eradicated in favour of a more natural style. Whilst this change predated Brown's career, it is a feature commonly found in his landscapes and thus represents what Repton refers to as the 'modern' style. Repton, however, criticises these gardens, stating;

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<sup>178</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, no.19.

we can see nothing natural, except the materials which Nature has furnished of land, trees and water; but all of these have been so forcibly under the control of Art, that they are no longer considered as natural objects any more than the stones and masonry of the house can be considered as natural rocks.<sup>179</sup>

Repton did not perceive the ‘modern’ style of Brown as suitable to the situation in front of Wanstead House. He argues; ‘it would be absurd in this place to conform to the modern style of placing the house in the centre of its domain, from which every thing is banished, but the beasts of the forest...we do not expect near a Metropolis any thing like perfect seclusion’.<sup>180</sup>

When lifting the flap of this subdued watercolour view to reveal the proposed improvement to this part of the grounds, a considerably more enlivened scene is revealed (fig. 144). The plain lawn has been replaced by a set of parterres: those to the west ‘with Corbilles of Roses and flowers mixed’; those to the east with ‘the more formal Embroidery Work with box &c’.<sup>181</sup> The parterre garden is fenced off by shrubbery and access to the main pathways leading toward the basin is provided through an arch on either side. A gentleman in the foreground appears engaged in discussion with his female companion about the parterres, while other figures can be seen seated or taking a walk. The scene surrounding the basin, however, is more populated still, suggesting that the parterre garden was intended to separate the spaces adjacent to the house, designed for family members, or friends of the family, from the wider public. Further activity can be

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<sup>179</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>180</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>181</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

seen in the two carriages with horses, which make their approach towards Wanstead House and the livestock grazing around the basin.

Repton acknowledges that his proposal for this view is ‘a dereliction of all the modern notions of taste in landscape gardening’.<sup>182</sup> This is because he incorporates elements of the ancient style. For example, a balustrade with a pedimented centrepiece, backed by a shrubbery, occupies the opposite side of the water in order to break up the original view of the wide sweeping avenue. However, it is the parterre garden that is the most significant feature of Repton’s proposed improvements. As discussed in chapter two, parterres were a popular landscape feature of the early eighteenth century. Their presence here is thus crucial in Repton’s ‘dereliction’ of the ‘modern’ style. As an outdated feature, he is careful to justify their use, describing the current lawn as ‘too small to be fed by flocks and herds, too large to be considered as a bowling green’.<sup>183</sup> Similar sentiments appear in *An Enquiry into the Changing Taste of Landscape Gardening* (1806), in Repton’s criticisms of Brown’s lawns which; ‘like a large room, when unfurnished, displeases more than a small one’.<sup>184</sup>

Whilst the proposal shows Repton’s deviation from Brownian principles, the parterres also served an important social function. Repton perceived Wanstead’s proximity to the capital to be one of its most important characteristics; ‘it must be classed with those royal and princely residences; those who could treat this splendid Palace like the seat of an English country gentleman, at the distance of

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<sup>182</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>183</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>184</sup> Repton, *Enquiry into the Changes of Taste*, p.13.

a hundred miles from the metropolis, would rob it of all its importance, and more than half its interest and beauty'.<sup>185</sup>

The front gardens at Wanstead ought, therefore, to serve as a public space, much like those at Carlton House or St James's in London. However, shortly after William and Catherine's arrival at Wanstead, William had ordered the former steward of the house to padlock the gates, in order to restrict access.<sup>186</sup> William had felt outraged by the frequent passing of 'unseemly carriages' directly beneath his window, which had 'offended his princely mansion'.<sup>187</sup> The public were displeased with William's attempts to deny them right of way, and his actions were soon brought to the attention of the Chelmsford Assizes.<sup>188</sup> The results of the trial forced him to reopen the gates, but these events meant that Repton was faced with the challenge of how to accommodate both his patron's desire for privacy and a wider concern for the types of social space which this estate, situated so close to London, was expected to provide.

Repton's concerns were strongly related to the growing detachment between landowners and rural communities.<sup>189</sup> The relationship between private and public space in a landscape was an increasingly pressing issue, and Repton devoted an entire chapter to it in his *Fragments*. Expressing concern over wealthy landowners sealing off their properties, and restricting public access, he states; 'as soon as a purchase is made, the first thing is to secure and shut up the

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<sup>185</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>186</sup> 'Interesting Trial', p.293.

<sup>187</sup> 'Interesting Trial', p.295.

<sup>188</sup> 'Interesting Trial', pp.293-296.

<sup>189</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.52.



whole by a lofty close pale'.<sup>190</sup> Repton describes the proposed shrubbery surrounding the parterres at Wanstead as intended to prevent 'the public looking into this private garden'.<sup>191</sup> By providing this secluded space by the house for Wanstead's owners, the idea was that the public could be granted better access into the wider grounds.

Repton thus argued, 'we must not consider the entrance of the park as the boundary of the domain'.<sup>192</sup> This point is underscored in two of Repton's watercolours, depicting views made from various points along the approach to Wanstead House (figs 145-147). Here, he positions himself as the visitor to the estate, enjoying different perspectives of the improved grounds as the magnificent house is slowly unveiled. The inclusion of such views were no doubt intended to remind William and Catherine of the benefits which granting access to the grounds could have upon their reputation as owners of the estate.

The significance of the relationship between Wanstead and the city is again referred to in Repton's notes for the view towards the south, taken from the portico (fig. 148). In these, he proposes to remove the trees hiding the distant prospect of the water and forest, and also, most importantly, the city; 'which at such a distance is a most impressive feature and in perfect harmony with the grandeur of the scene' (fig. 149).<sup>193</sup> Repton's description of Wanstead thus emphasises that its geographical position is a feature in which William ought to take pride, and the source of his fortunes:

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<sup>190</sup> See: Chapter XXXII 'Concerning Improvements' in Repton, *Fragments*, pp.191-194.

<sup>191</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>192</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>193</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.9.

We often hear people exclaim that they do not, in the Country, wish to hear or think of London; this feeling may be naturally accounted for in the anxious merchant, or the lawyer oppressed with business; but to the Senator and Statesman, who do not shrink from their duties, it must be a delightful sensation to enjoy the retirement of the country with the consciousness of being near the seat of all that gives dignity, rank and importance to the higher orders of society.<sup>194</sup>

In this view, the city of London is readily identifiable thanks to the dome of St Paul's Cathedral, a feature incorporated into the earliest views of the landscape by Kip and Knyff, highlighting the enduring significance of Wanstead's relationship with the metropolis (fig. 29).

#### View to the East

Repton's view towards the east is taken 'looking down from the balcony of the Saloon, upon the square shaped lawn... without anything to enliven it' (fig. 150).<sup>195</sup> The scene is uninteresting, with little to focus on. A simple wooden fence separates the house from the square lawn that leads the eye towards the canal and the avenue of trees in the distance. Trees to either side of the lawn obscure much of the surrounding landscape. There is no evidence to suggest that this terrain had undergone any improvements during the second half of the eighteenth century. Like Repton's view towards the west, this image thus depicts the landscape as created by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, when the parterres, bowling green, ponds and kitchen gardens introduced by London and Wise in the early eighteenth century had been removed.

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<sup>194</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.9.

<sup>195</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, No.16.

The proposal for this vista again demonstrates Repton's attempts to fuse the modern and ancient styles, in order to rectify the landscape's appearance (fig. 151). One of the ways in which he attempts to do so is by improving the square lawn situated beneath the saloon, which he describes as 'one of the least pleasing aspects of the ancient style'.<sup>196</sup> This was a product of Kent and Bridgeman's landscape, which had attempted to reduce the appearance of geometry. However, because it maintained an overall geometric form, Repton perceived as a poor compromise between the ancient and modern styles, and consequently as 'neither natural, nor of sufficient importance to be acknowledged as artificial'.<sup>197</sup> In this view, it is not so much the presence of the 'ancient style' that is problematic, but rather its appearance. Repton therefore applies 'modern' principles in order to correct the feature. The improved view shows the proposal to soften the lawn's geometric form by removing the trees on either side, opening up the garden in a manner typical of the 'modern' style.

Evidence of the 'ancient' style can also be seen in the avenue of trees in the distance and the canal but, unlike the square lawn, this area is described by Repton as too large to undergo alterations, and so he proposes that it should retain its original form. This illustrates his practical approach as a gardener. Nonetheless, Repton defends his decision to preserve the symmetry of this landscape by referencing Lord Kames's comments on taste, where he states; 'where the object is too large to be comprehended at once, symmetry assists the eye in developing its parts'.<sup>198</sup> Unlike Brown's seemingly endless landscapes,

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<sup>196</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.6.

<sup>197</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.6.

<sup>198</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

the preservation of the garden's earlier symmetry could assist the viewer by providing objects to focus on when looking out from the saloon.

Like the view to the west, this proposal also reflects Repton's concern for the relationship of public and private spaces in the estate landscape. His view to the east depicts an unpopulated scene. However, unlike the view to the west, Repton's improved view shows only three figures admiring the landscape from behind the balustrade fence. This was because he believed that different spaces in the estate landscape served different purposes. The landscape at the front of the house served as a public environment, whilst that situated at the rear, as a more private space, was not expected to conform to the same degree of public demand.<sup>199</sup> The figures in the improved view show that the gardens immediately beneath the saloon acted much like the enclosure of the Wanstead interior; intended primarily for family, friends and guests. Significantly, Repton did not include this scene in the *Fragments* excerpt, again suggesting that this space was designed principally as a private space for the new owners of Wanstead. Although he does incorporate a view of this garden on a fete day in the report, in which a crowd gathers on the lawn within the balustrade (fig. 152), access to this part of the landscape would have only been granted on such special occasions.

### The American Garden

As Daniels has argued, the Wanstead commission recapitulates many themes that ran through Repton's career.<sup>200</sup> A study of his report for Wanstead indicates

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<sup>199</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.8.

<sup>200</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.250.

his attempts to address a variety of issues in landscape gardening, such as the deployment of the ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ styles to suit the character of the site; the role of public access versus the demand for privacy; and the overall role of landscape gardening and its implications for the estate in the long eighteenth century.<sup>201</sup> In his views taken from Wanstead House, Repton emphasised variety in his employment of different styles: ‘Wanstead presents the means of producing great interest and novelty – partly by referring to the original style of gardens [the ancient style] and partly by granting on them New scenes of variety and contrast.’<sup>202</sup> Even in the concluding remarks of the report, Repton is still defending his incorporation of the ancient style at Wanstead; ‘while strongly recommending the ancient style of Gardening immediately near the house as more in character with it, I hope I shall not be accused of neglecting those parts of the place where Natural scenery may be displayed to the most advantage: according to the more modern style.’<sup>203</sup> The use of both idioms also allowed Repton to tackle concerns such as public access into the estate landscape, and the publication of his designs in *Fragments* could well have been influential for landowners adjusting to the expansion of country house visiting in the period.

When Repton died from a heart attack in March 1818, he was in considerable debt. Despite the level of care and attention he had invested in the Wanstead commission, it did little to revive his career, and William and Catherine were slow to pay. In 1816, Repton wrote to his patron, stating that he had considered the Wanstead commission to be one which, like the Brighton Pavilion and

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<sup>201</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.250.

<sup>202</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.10.

<sup>203</sup> Repton, *Proposals*, p.12.

Carlton House, should have brought him fame and financial income.<sup>204</sup> Wellesley's inability ultimately to pay for his extensive work meant that Wanstead was one of a number of Repton's final commissions that left the designer in financial ruin. Moreover, it indicates the financial strains beginning to loom over Wanstead.

Nonetheless, in the year of Repton's death, another set of design proposals by the landscape designer Lewis Kennedy (1789–1877) was presented to Wellesley, suggesting that, despite the growing financial crisis, there was still an idea that Wanstead should be 'improved'. Kennedy's proposals were to develop the American Garden at Wanstead. John Doyley's 1815 map of the estate shows this garden on the site of the former orange gardens, first depicted in one of the anonymous estate views made in the 1720s, located behind the greenhouse (figs 153 and 38). Peter Searle's 1779 survey of the estate records the orangery in the same location, indicating that, unlike others, this was a feature that survived throughout the eighteenth century (fig. 154). Its proximity to the greenhouse meant that the orange trees could be stored inside during the harsher winter months. The disposal of the greenhouse in 1795, however, presumably created the need for a new way to accommodate and care for more exotic plants and trees.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p.254. Daniels quotes letter from Huntingdon Library HM 40878, Humphry Repton to William Repton, 31 March 1816.

<sup>205</sup> ERO SALE/B284, Wanstead House sale of contents of the whole house and sale of greenhouses, 2 hothouses and contents including orange and lemon trees (London, 1799).

American Gardens enabled the planting of trees from the Americas, such as tulip trees, swamp cypress and liquidambars. They were also designed for the display of an array of exotic plants, including American rhododendrons, magnolias and kamilas. These gardens had become popular during the second half of the eighteenth century, when North American plants had become more widely available.<sup>206</sup> Although it is not clear when the American Garden had been first introduced to the estate at Wanstead, it is mentioned in Repton's report. This suggests that it was created between the time of Searle's survey in 1779 and Repton's employment in 1813. It would, therefore, seem to have been one of the very few additions to be made to the landscape, prior to Repton's commission.

Thus, when Kennedy was employed in 1818, he was being required to improve an extant feature, rather than propose an entirely new one. Like Repton, Kennedy was a designer who tended to submit his reports to his clients as a set of illustrated proposals with accompanying texts, which he entitled *Nottiae*. Kennedy's *Nottiae* for Wanstead shows that his design consisted of an Arbor Walk (fig. 155), a Rustic Alcove (fig. 156), an Italian Rock Garden (fig. 157), a Sinarium and Pheasantries (fig. 158). The principle feature, however, was clearly the Italian Rock Garden, which was to be located in the centre of the American Garden (fig. 159). Kennedy recommended that visitors approach this via a proposed covered walk, as 'this manner of discovery will tend greatly to enhance its character, and impress its peculiar beauties more strongly on the mind'.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> P. Goode and M. Lancaster, *Oxford Companion to Gardens* (London, 1986), p.15.

<sup>207</sup> Kennedy, *Nottiae*, sketch no. 3.

Landscape gardener and horticultural writer, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), described Kennedy's American Garden at Wanstead as 'one of the largest'.<sup>208</sup> It is also recorded in the Wanstead sale in June and September 1822.<sup>209</sup> This included items such as 'a pair of handsome lead vases, with eagle ornaments on top', 'a pair of beautiful stone pedestals' and a 'curious antique Egyptian stone ornament'.<sup>210</sup> Archaeological evidence, such as the Lidar scan, however, shows only a portion of the American Garden, suggesting that perhaps not all of Kennedy's design was implemented (fig. 160). If the archaeological evidence is accurate, then it is most likely that the ideas in *Nottiae* were put on hold at some point, due to the approaching financial crisis.

#### Furnishing Wanstead House 1813 – 1822

Whilst efforts were being made to improve the surrounding landscape, the Wanstead interior was also undergoing changes. On the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1815, William received a letter from antiquarian and topographer, John Britton, requesting 'some account of the chief alterations that have been made since you came into possessions of that property [Wanstead]' to include in his publication, *The beauties of England and Wales*.<sup>211</sup> One year later, *The Morning Post* reported on the christening of William and Catherine's second son, James Fitzroy Henry, and referred to the extensive refurbishing that had taken place at Wanstead

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<sup>208</sup> J. C Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (London, 1822), p.1232; For Loudon see: B. Elliott, 'Loudon, John Claudius (1783–1843)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17031](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17031), accessed 12 May 2016.

<sup>209</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*; CVE 39280.

<sup>210</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 29, pp.372-373; CVE 39280, p.52.

<sup>211</sup> RCL Box 4, Vol. 1, Letter no. 35, John Britton to William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1815; J. Britton, *The beauties of England and Wales: or, Delineations, topographical, historical, and description of each country*, 6 vols, (London, 1816).



House; ‘since the union of the heiress of the TYLNEY family with that of WELLESLEY, the interior has undergone the most classical improvements’.<sup>212</sup> Of course, some of the furnishings to which these sources refer would have been part of Catherine’s earlier efforts to revive Wanstead, prior to her marriage. However, as is evident from the Repton commission, she, together with William, continued to be keen to restore Wanstead to its former splendor. Thus, at least some of the interior features referred to by Britton and praised by *The Morning Post* would have been additions made by the married couple, after 1812.

Amongst the most notable furnishings to appear in the 1822 sale is the collection of French furniture. This does not appear in the 1795 inventory, and it is unlikely to have been acquired until after the Napoleonic Wars. The immense economic and social upheaval that had occurred during the French revolution meant that a significant amount of French art and furniture had come onto the market, and become comparatively accessible and affordable for English collectors. The most sought after items amongst Regency collectors were those attributed to Andre-Charles Boulle (1642-1732), master cabinet-maker to Louis XIV. According to Charles Cator, Wanstead was ‘extraordinarily rich in sumptuous examples of Louis XIV Boulle’.<sup>213</sup> Examples can be found in the listings for the ballroom, the grand hall, drawing room, and the blue damask state bedchamber.<sup>214</sup> The style seems to have maintained its popularity in France throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, largely due to its high

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<sup>212</sup> *The Morning Post*, 9 August 1816.

<sup>213</sup> C. Cator, ‘French Furniture at Wanstead’, *Furniture History*, Vol. 43 (2007), pp.227-235.

<sup>214</sup> See listings for *Wanstead House Sale*.

quality craftsmanship.<sup>215</sup> The success of Boulle's designs meant that numerous reproductions were made and, as furniture produced by his workshop was never stamped, it can be difficult to identify original pieces.<sup>216</sup> Consequently, the term Boulle, or 'Buhl', came to refer to the overall design style, which consisted of brass, tortoiseshell, or other material used to cut a pattern and inlay into furniture. Therefore, whilst numerous references to 'Buhl' can be found throughout the Wanstead sale catalogue, it is important to keep in mind that items described as such are not necessarily from the original workshop.

Despite issues around authenticity, many of the 'buhl' items in the 1822 sale catalogue are amongst the most costly items listed. Lot 14, for example, from the ballroom, sold for £141, 15 shillings:

A MAGNIFICENT SQUARE ROSE-WOOD LIBRARY TABLE, THE TOP LINED RUSSIA LEATHER (ONE SKIN) WITH BEAUTIFUL BUHL AND TORTOISE-SHELL HONEYSUCKLE BORDER, AND MASSIVE RICHLY CHASED OR-MOULU MOULDED EDGE, SUPPORTED ON SUPERB BUHL AND ROSE-WOOD COLUMNS, exquisitely mounted in Or-molu WITH Splendid massive carved and gilt Cupid Figures, presenting Fruit and Flowers, ON an elegant double-step hollow fronted plinth, MASSIVE OR MOULU MOULDING ROUND DITTO AND

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<sup>215</sup> P. Fuhring, 'Designs for and after Boulle furniture', *Burlington Magazine*, Vol.134, No.1071 (June 1992), pp.350-362. The preference for Boulle's designs was particularly popular during the 1770s at the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI and again in about 1850 during the reign of Louis Philippe.

<sup>216</sup> Fuhring, 'Designs for and after Boulle furniture', p.351.

CASTERS, And handsome crimson-ground chints Case, lined Calico, 7 feet by 5 feet.<sup>217</sup>

The sale catalogue listings also demonstrate that ‘Buhl’ items of furniture were not restricted to ‘parade rooms’. For example, Lot 28, on day eighteen, was ‘A SUPERB TORTOISE-SHELL AND BUHL ANTIQUE PARISIAN Escrutoire’, situated in the blue damask bedroom.<sup>218</sup> However, following the methodology of the previous chapter, I will focus here on the three principal rooms of Wanstead House, all of which contained Buhl furniture: the great hall, the ballroom and the saloon.

When entering the great hall during William and Catherine’s ownership, visitors would likely have been impressed by a matching French barometer and thermometer, listed in the sale catalogue as: ‘A CURIOUS AND TRULY VALUABLE ANTIQUE PARISIAN EBONY-FRAME TORTOISE-SHELL AND BUHL BAROMETER [or THERMOMETER]’, now held in a private collection (fig. 161).<sup>219</sup> According to Cator, these were probably amongst the most unusual and impressive items of French furniture to be perused by collectors at the Wanstead sale.<sup>220</sup> Their position in the hall would have ensured that they helped to impress visitors with a display of both splendor and adherence to contemporary taste, which would be continued throughout the interior. Located nearby, on the grand staircase, was one of the more expensive

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<sup>217</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 13, no.29, lot 14. In 1820, £141 15s 0d would have amounted to £5,942.16 in 2005, National Archives Currency Converter.

<sup>218</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 18, Lot 28.

<sup>219</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 12, Lot. 44 and Lot 45.

<sup>220</sup> Cator, ‘French Furniture at Wanstead’, p.230.

items of French furniture: a clock by the seventeenth-century French clock maker Claude Raillard. This was described as: ‘AN ELEGANT AND COSTLY TORTOISE-SHELL AND BUHL *Parisian Clock*’.<sup>221</sup> This clearly demonstrates that an object by another designer, such as Raillard, could be cited as by ‘Buhl’. The term here describes, above all, the style of the clock.

Exiting the hall, and proceeding along the enfilade to the ballroom, the visitor would encounter further examples of luxurious French furniture, such as a buhl cabinet, library table, and Parisian pier table, much like that currently held in the Wallace Collection (fig. 162).<sup>222</sup> According to the sale catalogue, Thomas Philip Weddell, 2nd Earl Grey of Newby and Wrest Park, a celebrated enthusiast for French eighteenth-century art, acquired these furnishings.<sup>223</sup> Proceeding from the ballroom along the south façade to the saloon, one would encounter an object described on the sixteenth day of the sale as: ‘A SUPERB ANTIQUE PARISIAN BUHL AND TORTOISE-SHELL Commode’.<sup>224</sup> Again, this was

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<sup>221</sup> Claude Raillard is recorded working in Paris from 1662 until 1700. The piece is therefore an authentic seventeenth-century item, and it is of little surprise that it was amongst the most expensive items in the sale.

<sup>222</sup> Lot 17 was ‘A SPLENDID TORTOISE-SHELL AND BUHL ANTIQUE PARISIAN CABINET’, whilst lot 14 was described as ‘A MAGNIFICENT SQUARE ROSE-WOOD LIBRARY TABLE, THE TOP LINED RUSSIA LEATHER (ONE SKIN) WITH BEAUTIFUL BUL AND TORTOISE-SHELL HONEYSUCKLE BORDER, AND MASSIVE RICHLY CHASED OR-MOULU MOULDED EDGE, SUPPORTED ON SUPERB BUHL AND ROSE-WOOD COLUMNS’. Also located in the ballroom were ‘A COSTLY ANTIQUE BUHL AND TORTOISE-SHELL PARISIAN PIER TABLE, with three drawers in the frame, and ornamental rail shelf under, with or-moulu tripod frame, vase in the centre, elegantly mounted with rich chased mouldings, &c. on six legs and twisted shell feet, 3 feet 11 wide.’

<sup>223</sup> See NAL copy of *Wanstead House Sale* which records buyers names for these items.

<sup>224</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 16, lot 26.

one of the most expensive items, purchased for £40.<sup>225</sup> The high prices at which these items sold, and the fact that they were bought by such avid Regency collectors as Philip John Miles, George Byng and Grey, demonstrates that William and Catherine had enhanced the interior of Wanstead in a manner which very much complied with the latest tastes of the elite.

## **Conclusion**

The improvements made to the Wanstead interior and landscape appear poignant when one acknowledges that William and Catherine's efforts to revive and improve the estate were undoubtedly major contributing factors in its demise. In 1726, Daniel Defoe had cautioned the mercantile elite and their inheritors about the dangers of excessive expenditure.<sup>226</sup> Wanstead's decline highlights how these dangers continued to exist for the newly wealthy into the next century and in, 1822, William and Catherine followed their solicitor's advice, agreeing that 'this expensive establishment should be got rid of, by disposing of the Materials and furniture'.<sup>227</sup> Wanstead was no longer a feasible property, and arrangements for the sale were duly made.

Despite the pressing need for the sale to rescue and protect what remained of the family fortunes, not all of Wanstead's furnishings were made available for purchase. Catherine's earlier efforts to renovate the original Wanstead interior indicate her awareness of her heritage and, although residing in France at the

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<sup>225</sup> In 1820, £40 0s 0d would have amounted to £1,676.80 in 2005. National Archives Currency Converter.

<sup>226</sup> D. Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726), p.89.

<sup>227</sup> ERO D/DQs/113/9.

time of the sale, she surely felt sorrow at the loss. It is therefore significant that attempts were made to preserve a number of the family portraits listed in the June 1822 sale. Lieutenant Colonel Merrick Shawe, private secretary to the Wellesley family, wrote to William on the first day of the auction, regarding the paintings intended for safeguarding;

We went over Wanstead House with old Molly who pointed out the family pictures...it would be wrong to suffer one of these to be sold and they would not be anything worth considering... I have desired Robins to buy them all in and I dare say it will not make £100 difference, and you would be justly blamed for letting them go.<sup>228</sup>

As stated in Shawe's letter, Robins the auctioneer was to ensure these remained in Pole Tylney Long Wellesley ownership. A marked copy of the 1822 sale catalogue in the National Art Library collection records a number of the family portraits acquired by a buyer named 'Jones'. However, another copy of the catalogue, held in Redbridge Central Library, records the same paintings as having been purchased by Wellesley. This strongly suggests that 'Jones' was not purchasing the works for his own collection, but was rather acting as an agent, buying the works for Wellesley so that they could be kept within the family.

The paintings acquired by Jones included important family portraits such as lot 171: 'A view of the interior of the ballroom of Wanstead House, with a numerous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen' by William Hogarth (fig. 6), and lot 318, 'Nollikins, Interior of the Saloon of Wanstead House, with an

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<sup>228</sup> *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command*, Vol. 23 (1838); ERO D/DB f116/4, Shawe to Wellesley, 10 June 1822.

assemblage of Ladies and gentlemen' (fig. 19).<sup>229</sup> Other paintings recorded as being acquired by Jones, presumably for Wellesley, included: lot 20 on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 'A Portrait of a lady with a dog'; lot 29, 'A Portrait of a Gentleman, with a blue mantle'; and lot 74, 'A Portrait of a Lady in Blue, with a red mantle'.<sup>230</sup> These are likely to be three of six portraits attributed to Geoffrey Kneller, described by Lybbe Powys in 1781.<sup>231</sup> Whilst a number of these family portraits are now untraceable, the efforts to save them highlight the importance of preserving such images, even at a time of crisis.<sup>232</sup>

Kate Retford states that it was perceived to be the duty of aristocrats, regardless of gender, to maintain, consolidate and continue their family's portrait collections. Portrait displays were believed to be capable of inspiring future generations, enforcing claims to heritage and respectability.<sup>233</sup> Marcia Pointon

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<sup>229</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot 171 and day 10, lot 318.

<sup>230</sup> *Wanstead House Sale*, day 9, lot 20, lot 29 and lot 74.

<sup>231</sup> E.J. Climençon ed., *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys, of Hardwick House, Oxon., A.D. 1756 to 1808* (London, 1899), p.205.

<sup>232</sup> Miles Barton's article for the *Georgian Group Journal* discusses a portrait thought to depict Richard Child, Viscount Castlemain and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney, listed as lot 328 on day 10 of the sale as 'Richardson – A portrait of a Gentleman in blue.' The painting was amongst those bought in at the 1822 Wanstead sale, but its whereabouts after 1822 are unknown. The painting resurfaced in 2001 attributed to 'a follower of Michael Dahl', and as having belonged to Richard Child, but further enquiries have proven unsuccessful. This is currently the only known verified portrait of a Wanstead family member. See: M. Barton, 'Notes and queries: Sir Richard Child of Wanstead: a portrait revealed', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. 19 (2011), pp.184-185. Tim Couzens has carried out extensive research, tracing the furnishings and art works of Wanstead House that were sold in the 1822 sale. Special thanks to Tim Couzens for a conversation regarding the tracing of the sale items and the collection of family portraits put aside for Wellesley in the 1822 sale.

<sup>233</sup> K. Retford, 'Patrilineal Portraiture? Gender and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Country House' in *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, eds J. Styles and A. Vickery (New Haven and London, 2006), p.340.

also notes that family portraits were highly valued, not necessarily because of their material worth, but rather because they provided symbolic continuity. As a result, they would often be the final possessions to be disposed of when a family was faced with the task of selling inherited goods. Family portraits were thus usually amongst the least disturbed of objects in a house, underlining their significance as markers of family longevity.<sup>234</sup>

Richard Sheridan's play *The School for Scandal* (1777) highlights how the selling of such heirlooms could meet with disapproval. Upon understanding his nephew's intentions to sell the family portraits, Sir Oliver Surface remarks: 'What the devil! Sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers would you?', to which his nephew, Charles Surface responds: 'Every man of them, to the best bidder.'<sup>235</sup> When Kneller's portrait of Charles's great Aunt Deborah is priced at £5 10s by the auctioneer, Sir Oliver is astounded: 'Ah! Poor Deborah! A Woman who set such a value on herself!'<sup>236</sup> Sir Oliver's decision to purchase the portraits indicates a sense of duty to preserve the collection of heirlooms, which underpins the family's longevity. The Wanstead sale must surely have resonated with Sheridan's drama.

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<sup>234</sup> M. Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and social formation in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 1993).

<sup>235</sup> R. B. Sheridan, 'The School for Scandal' in *The Rivals, The School for Scandal and other plays* (London, 1890), p.185.

<sup>236</sup> Sheridan, 'The School for Scandal', p.187.



Wanstead House itself was sold in 1823 for £10,000. The solicitor's letter to Wellesley in 1822 marks the first occasion - at least in the evidence available here - on which Wanstead's proximity to London was no longer considered an asset; 'the local advantages which induced the original properties to create it...being so near to the metropolis – it is less desirable as a country seat'.<sup>237</sup>

The financial depression in England during this period meant that funds for the upkeep of the house, not to mention the cost of refurnishing its now largely empty interior, were too costly and as a result, few were able to contemplate buying it.<sup>238</sup> In September that same year, William's father, William Wellesley-Pole, Baron of Maryborough, wrote to him stating;

the proposal for purchasing the House and Park with a view of it becoming a residence for the purchaser has never yet regularly come before us...we must sell the house with a condition that it is to be pulled down within a permitted period and that the park for the present must be let as farms from year to year'.<sup>239</sup>

In a letter addressed to William in 1821, A.R Blake similarly advises pulling down Wanstead, stating that it would be 'indispensable to your substantial relief'.<sup>240</sup> The selling of Wanstead's contents may have resolved some of its

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<sup>237</sup> ERO D/DQs/113/9.

<sup>238</sup> Evidence in the Essex Record Office indicates that the Duke of York expressed an interest in purchasing Wanstead House, 'The Duke of York was hugely pleased with your offer of Wanstead I gave him your letter to read – He seemed really pleased, & said he would fix a day as soon as the --- allowed.' See: ERO D/DB f116/4, Merrick Shawe to William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, 5 November 1820.

<sup>239</sup> RCL Box 4, Vol. 2, Letter No. 21, Baron Maryborough to William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, 10 September 1822.

<sup>240</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4.

owner's debts but, 'though freed from your [Wellesley's] personal charges, the property must descend to your successor with considerable permanent incumbrances...it strikes me that the measure would be beneficial not only to you, but to those who come after you'.<sup>241</sup> Whilst William was restricted from selling Wanstead, no legal statement prohibited demolishing the building. William had discovered a catastrophic loophole.

Not only was the estate of Wanstead thus lost to the family, but the Tylney bloodline was also soon to disappear. William and Catherine had three children, William Richard Arthur (1813–63), James Fitzroy Henry (1815–51), and Victoria Catherine Mary (1818–97). William Richard Arthur inherited the title of 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Mornington, but he died unmarried and childless in Paris in 1863. His brother, James, had an early career in the army, later becoming a prize-boxing fighter, but he also died young. Victoria continued to reside with her aunts and remained single for the rest of her life. Following their divorce in 1825, and Catherine's untimely death that same year, William was refused custody of their children.<sup>242</sup> He eventually died destitute in lodgings in Manchester Square, London, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1857. His obituary in *The Morning*

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<sup>241</sup> ERO D/DB f116/4.

<sup>242</sup> Correspondence held in Redbridge Central Library gives evidence of the dispute regarding the divorce and William's difficulty in gaining custody of the children. See Box 4, Vol. 1, Letter No. 46 and Box 4, Vol. 2, Letter No. 24, William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley to Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1824. Geraldine Roberts carried out extensive research on the court trials for William and Catherine's divorce for her novel *The Angel and the Cad*. This included Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/JO/10/8/758, *Wellesley v. Wellesley* which incorporates the trial transcripts and affidavits from *Wellesley v. Beaufort*; See: G. Roberts, *The Angel and the Cad: Love, Loss and Scandal in Regency England* (London, 2015). See also: Stead, pp.81, 86, 90, 91, 92, 94, 98, 122

*Chronicle*, published on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1857, described him as ‘redeemed by no single virtue, adorned by no single grace’.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*, 2 July 1857

## Conclusion

This dissertation has provided a detailed, chronologically organised history of Wanstead from Josiah Child's acquisition in 1673 until its demolition in 1824. The lack of such a thorough study of Wanstead House and its landscape to date has meant that one of the most significant and influential estates of the Georgian period has been overlooked in the field of country house studies. Its neglect is surprising given that work at the property was amongst the first commissions of the major designers, Colen Campbell and William Kent. Furthermore, according to the Reverend Stebbing Shaw, none of the houses which imitated Wanstead's design were quite as impressive: 'Mr Colin Campbell was the architect who, by the execution of this noble structure, has given hints to succeeding artists, but has never been rivalled by any imitations.'<sup>1</sup> The improvements carried out by Wanstead's various owners consolidated its early established reputation as one of the most significant estates in the country. In 1724, Daniel Defoe described Wanstead House as 'extremely glorious and magnificent', and, in 1800, *The Gentleman's Magazine* commented that; 'foreigners assign more architectural merit [to Wanstead House] than to most others of our noblemen's residences'.<sup>2</sup>

The life span of Wanstead House under the Child family's ownership broadly covers the long eighteenth century; a transformative period in country house

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<sup>1</sup> S. Shaw, *Tour to the West of England* (London, 1788), p.28.

<sup>2</sup> P.N Furbank and W.R. Owens ed., *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain / Daniel Defoe*, (London, 1991), p.41; *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*, Vol. 70 (London, 1800), p.1069.

building and landscape design. This thesis has explored issues of estate ownership and the differing contexts and intentions behind the improvements carried out. Josiah Child's purchase of Wanstead indicates the rise of the newly moneyed mercantile elite during the late seventeenth century. The landscape improvements implemented during this period set the foundations for the flourishing of the estate in the eighteenth century. Richard Child, Viscount Castlemaine and 1st Earl Tylney, continued working with Josiah's long-term vision, and his ownership, spanning the first half of the eighteenth century, was the most active period of architectural and landscape development at Wanstead. The three, somewhat brief, ownerships that occurred between 1751 and 1822 are also significant, however, in more modest ways. John Child, 2nd Earl Tylney, made improvements, in part in response to widespread disapproval of his absenteeism, while James Tylney Long and William and Catherine Pole Tylney Long Wellesley struggled with problems relating to inheritance and estate management.

Whilst perhaps a somewhat traditional approach, organising this study of Wanstead House chronologically helps to establish the life of the estate from 1673 until 1824, making it possible fully to 'animate' Wanstead, pinpointing when improvements were made, by which owner, and why. This enables us to situate Wanstead within the wider context of eighteenth-century art, social, cultural, and economic histories. Documenting the history of Wanstead in this way is also beneficial as it forces the historian not only to examine periods of high activity, but also periods of low activity. There is often a tendency, particularly if presented with a rich archive for a particular ownership or stage

of improvement, to focus on more active periods in the life of a country house, thereby neglecting those for which evidence is sparse and in which little activity occurred. But Jeremy Musson has commented that focusing on certain periods of country-house ownership can mean that the historian misses out on ‘the glorious oddities, along with the human story of the house’.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as this study of Wanstead has demonstrated, the more desultory periods of ownership can provide alternative perspectives on an eighteenth-century estate.

Another advantage of chronologically ‘animating’ Wanstead House is that it shows that the process of improvement was necessarily a gradual, time-consuming one. For example, during Richard Child’s ownership, between 1704 and 1750, the landscape underwent two phases of improvement, the old Wanstead manor was demolished, Colen Campbell’s new classical design was erected and an extensive furnishing scheme for its interior was carried out by William Kent. In this period in particular, Wanstead was in a constant state of flux, undergoing regular work. Examining the process of Wanstead’s construction also supports a key argument of this thesis. Literature on the topic frequently refers to Wanstead as a neo-Palladian design, but a detailed study of Campbell’s designs for Wanstead shows that it was in fact a synthesis of architectural styles.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J. Musson, *How to Read a Country House* (London, 2005), p.13.

<sup>4</sup> J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (Harmondsworth, 1983); J. Harris, *The Palladians* (London, 1981); H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (London, 1978).

Animating Wanstead House can also challenge the commonly held belief that William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley was solely to blame for bringing down the family estate. This is only partly accurate because, just as Wanstead's development was gradual, so too was its demise.<sup>5</sup> The Tylney family ledgers show that debt was already a concern in the 1760s, and evidence from various newspapers suggests that efforts were already being made to sell off parts of Wanstead House prior to William and Catherine's ownership. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 1795, for example, *The Morning Post and Fashionable World* announced an auction of Wanstead's livestock and agricultural equipment and, in 1799, the contents of Wanstead's greenhouse, including an impressive collection of orange and lemon trees, as well as two hot houses, was also sold off.<sup>6</sup> On 12<sup>th</sup> June 1800, *The Whitehall Evening Post* announced a third sale of 'Feather Beds, Carpets & Attic Furniture &c. belonging to Wanstead House'.<sup>7</sup> Whilst the documentation around the thirty-two day sale of Wanstead's contents in

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<sup>5</sup> In the majority of existing literature for Wanstead, William is perceived to be responsible for the downfall of the Wanstead estate. See for example: O. Dawson, *The Story of Wanstead Park. 1894* (London, 1995); Essex Record Office T/P 266/27, J.E Tuffs, *The History of Wanstead: 1727-1771*, Vol. 4 (London, 1945). Hereafter ERO; G.E Tasker, 'Wanstead: Its Manor and Palace', *Essex Review*, Vol. 7 (1898), pp.213-30; W. Tegg, *A Sketch of Wanstead Park, And of the House which formerly stood there* (London, 1882); P. Lawrence, *The Rise and Fall of Wanstead House, 1667 – 1857* (London, 2008); W. Addison, *Wanstead Park* (London, 1973); G. Roberts, *The Angel and The Cad: Love, Loss and Scandal in Regency England* (London, 2015); L. Winter, 'The Lovely Miss Long', *Longman's Magazine 1820-1905* (July 1905), pp.213-222; Geraldine Robert's recent historical novel *The Angel and The Cad* frames William as guilty for the break up of the Wanstead estate. Whilst William certainly played a part in its downfall, to hold him fully responsible is to simplify the complexities surrounding eighteenth-century estate management.

<sup>6</sup> *Morning Post & Fashionable World*, 16 April 1795; ERO SALE/B284, Wanstead House sale of contents of the whole house and sale of greenhouses, 2 hothouses and contents including orange and lemon trees (London, 1799).

<sup>7</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post*, 12 June 1800.

the summer of 1822 has been a significant and frequent source of reference throughout this dissertation, this did not complete the dispersal of property. In September that year, a second sale had to be held to sell off items remaining from the summer, including significant artworks, luxurious tapestries and opulent furnishings.<sup>8</sup> This indicates that, despite the attention received during the June sale, there remained some difficulty in fully liquidating the estate's assets. The financial returns from both these 1822 sales proved still insufficient and, in 1823, Wanstead's architectural shell was finally sold: the building fabric dispersed and the house brought to the ground in 1824.

It is important to emphasise that Wanstead's dispersal and demolition was not entirely unusual. Whilst few estate owners were able to sell off their estates in this way, due to the restrictions of strict settlement, it was not unheard of for properties to come under the hammer at a time of financial crisis.<sup>9</sup> In 1747, Cannons in Middlesex, the home to Richard Child's step-sister Cassandra Brydges, Duchess of Chandos, was demolished following the death of her husband, James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, in 1744.<sup>10</sup> When Wanstead was

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<sup>8</sup> Bibliotheque National France CVE 39280, *A Catalogue of the superb Gobelin tapestry, beautiful damask and velvet hangings, and other articles, of the princely mansion, Wanstead house, deferred at the late sale, together with various uncleared lots* (London, 1822).

Hereafter BNF. Special thanks to Loic Le Bail for his assistance at the Bibliotheque National de France and for providing me with access and copies to this material.

<sup>9</sup> R. MacArthur, 'Going for a Song? Country House Sales in Georgian England' in *Modernity and the Second Hand Trade: European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700-1900*, ed., J. Stobart, (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.175-195.

<sup>10</sup> *The Kaleidoscope*, 24 September 1822; J. Johnson, 'Brydges, James, first duke of Chandos (1674-1744)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,

[www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3806](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3806), accessed 2 December 2015. Hereafter ODNB. For a copy of the Canons sale catalogue see: Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, *A Catalogue*



pulled to the ground in 1824, *The Kaleidoscope* compared its demolition to Canons, stating: ‘Sic transit gloria mundi’; ‘thus passes the glory of the world’.<sup>11</sup> Philip Stanhope, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Chesterfield’s Eythorpe House in Buckinghamshire (c.1750) suffered a similar fate between 1810 and 1811, as did the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Portland’s Bulstrode Park in 1814, not long after its remodelling by architect, James Wyatt.<sup>12</sup> In 1822, William Beckford arranged a sale of the contents of his home, Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire (c.1745).<sup>13</sup> Although the sale was eventually cancelled, it attracted a significant amount of attention in the press. *The Mirror of Literature* drew comparisons between the auctions at Fonthill and Wanstead, noting, ‘the tide of public curiosity which at one time this summer flowed so uninterruptedly to Wanstead House...had no sooner run its course, than it found a new attraction – that of Fonthill Abbey’.<sup>14</sup> In 1827, King George IV’s London residence, Carlton

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*of All the Materials of the Dwelling-house, out-Houses &c of His Grace James Duke of Chandos...At his Late Seat call'd Cannons...Sold by Auction by Mr.Cock...16 June 1747, and the Eleven Following Days.*

<sup>11</sup> ‘Chit-Chat’, *The Kaleidoscope: or Literary and scientific mirror*, 24 September 1822, pp.95-96.

<sup>12</sup> H. Colvin, ‘Eythorpe House and its demolition in 1810-1811’, *Records of Buckinghamshire*, Vol. 16, part 4 (1963), pp.219-227; Buckinghamshire Record Office, Spencer-Bernard papers, E 14/3 and 5, *A Catalogue of the Valuable Building Materials of Eythorpe Mansion House...Sold by Auction, by Mr Hermon* (15 August 1810).

<sup>13</sup> A. Nellis Richter, ‘Spectacle, Exoticism, and Display in the Gentleman’s House’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Summer, 2008), pp.543-563; A. McConnell, ‘Beckford, William Thomas (1760–1844)’, ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1905](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1905), accessed 2 December 2015. For other literature on Georgian country house sales see: MacArthur, ‘Going for a Song?’, pp. 175-195; C. Wall, ‘The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings’, *Journal of Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1997), pp.1-26.

<sup>14</sup> *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement & Instruction*, 16 November 1822, pp.33-35.

House, was brought to the ground, presumably due to over expenditure on the recent furnishing of its interior.<sup>15</sup>

Sales and demolitions were therefore far from unknown. Neither were they necessarily associated with a particular period, geographical region or class of owner. The demise and demolition of any of these houses was a poignant business, as these were structures built as symbols of power and optimism, anticipating a lengthy future for the family's ownership. Wanstead's demolition is nonetheless distinctive for two closely interrelated reasons. One is its location in the environs of London. As noted throughout this thesis, views of the capital are visible in a number of images of Wanstead produced throughout the eighteenth century and, in 1813, Repton described Wanstead's proximity to London as accounting for more than half its interest and beauty.<sup>16</sup> Surviving properties situated on the outskirts of London include Chiswick House (c.1729) (fig. 163), Marble Hill (1750-1) and Strawberry Hill in Twickenham (1750-3) (fig. 164), Osterley Park, Middlesex (1763-80) (fig. 165), Kenwood, Hampstead Heath (1767-9) (fig. 166) and Syon Park, Middlesex (1784) (fig. 167). However, unlike Wanstead, these properties more closely conform to the 'villa ideology' introduced by Lord Burlington at Chiswick, rather than that of the aristocratic, country house.<sup>17</sup> The adoption of

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<sup>15</sup> C. Hibbert, 'George IV (1762–1830)', ODNB, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10541](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10541), accessed 24 May 2016.

<sup>16</sup> H. Repton, *Report on Wanstead Landscape*, (1813), p.8.

<sup>17</sup> For literature on the Georgian villa see: D. Arnold, *The Georgian Villa* (Stroud, 1996); J. Ackerman, *The Villa: form, and ideology of country houses* (London, 1990). For Burlington's villa at Chiswick see: J. Harris, *The Palladian Revival: Lord Burlington, His Villa and Garden at Chiswick* (New Haven and London, 1994).

a villa ideology by properties situated so near the metropolis was logical because the relationship with the city was integral; its proximity to the metropolis intended to provide quick and easy retreat from urban life.

The other distinctive quality of Wanstead was its size and grandeur. A comparison between the aforementioned properties in John Rocque's 1746 survey of London shows how Wanstead, particularly in its scale, outshone the suburban villas and instead compares more closely with Kensington Palace (figs 168 and 169). Wanstead's inclusion in the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, alongside Blenheim Palace, Castle Howard and Chatsworth, indicates that, from as early as 1715, before its completion, the public were encouraged to perceive Wanstead as rather equivalent to other aristocratic landed estates, more substantial than other, typical suburban retreats.<sup>18</sup> Narratives such as Pierre Fougereux's account of his 1728 tour of England included detailed descriptions and sketches of Wanstead's landscape alongside other major properties such as Boughton, Wimpole and Blenheim.<sup>19</sup>

Wanstead maintained its reputation as the grandest property in the local area throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> In 1724, Defoe commented that there were 'several very good houses at Wanstead', but noted that they all seemed

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<sup>18</sup> C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus* (London, 1715), I.

<sup>19</sup> National Art Library, P.J Fougereux, *Voyage d'Angleterre, d'Hollande et de Flandre, fait en l'annee 1728* (1728). Hereafter NAL.

<sup>20</sup> M. Parsons, 'Wanstead' in *A History of the County of Essex*, ed., W.R. Powell, Vol. 5, (London, 1973), p.319; British Library Maps, Rocque, *An Exact Survey of the City's of London*, 1746.

‘swallow’d up in the lustre of his lordship’s [Richard Child’s] palace’.<sup>21</sup> Second to Wanstead were other properties like Francis Dashwood’s Wanstead Grove, later owned by the successful financier Matthew Wymonde, sold in the mid eighteenth century; Blake Hall (1690) (fig. 170); Manor House (which survives as the West Essex Conservative Club) (fig. 171); Reydon Hall (fig. 172); Elm Hall (fig. 173) and Spratt Hall (c.1746), demolished during the late nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> These properties are also comparably smaller on Rocque’s map and were not intended to serve as a local power base and status symbol in the same way as Wanstead (fig. 168). Instead, they more typically represent the kind of property the majority of the elite mercantile class acquired. In addition, historians such as Giles Worsley, John Harris, Marcus Binney and Roy Strong have studied Rolls Park, Weald Hall, Copped Hall and Marks Hall as amongst the most notable of Essex properties.<sup>23</sup> However, these residences do not feature in contemporary accounts in the same way as Wanstead, and commentators apparently did not draw much comparison between these houses and Child’s estate.

Thus, Wanstead was a suburban residence in its location, but, in its scale and appearance, it was more closely identified with the great country houses of England. This combination of proximity to London and grand scale greatly encouraged visitors, obliging the owners of Wanstead to fulfil the traditional duties of hospitality and sociability associated with the landed estate.

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<sup>21</sup> Defoe, *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p.104.

<sup>22</sup> Parsons, *Victoria History*, p.319.

<sup>23</sup> G. Worsley, *England’s Lost Houses* (London, 2002), pp.28, 107, 111 & 121; J. Harris, R. Strong and M. Binney, ed., *The Destruction of the Country House 1875-1975* (London, 1974).

Wanstead's popularity is evident from as early as 1712 in the poem *Flora Triumphans*, which described the 'daily pilgrim troops' arriving at Wanstead.<sup>24</sup> Numerous engravings of the house and its landscape during the late eighteenth century, such as that by George Robertson in 1780, depict visitors of various social classes, the majority arriving presumably from the city (fig. 78a). And, in 1813, Repton commented on Wanstead's owners' duty to provide access, claiming that not to do so would be highly detrimental; 'if it were possible to remove the gay assemblages...we should only produce one dull and cheerless solitude'.<sup>25</sup> Evidence of visitor tickets in the September 1822 catalogue shows how Wanstead received high numbers of visitors right up until the final dispersal.<sup>26</sup>

Although the suburban villa was originally designed to function as a site of retreat, to contemplate intellectual matters, socialise with a small group of friends or family, and enjoy some solitary peace and privacy, the fame of residences such as Chiswick and Strawberry Hill meant that they too, accommodated visitors on a regular basis. However, Jon Stobart had noted that major social events, such as large parties, were relatively unusual in the suburban villa, and that such entertainments were generally reserved for the great houses of elite society.<sup>27</sup> The scale and wealth of the Wanstead estate

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<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden, An Heroick Poem Most Humbly Addrest to the honourable Sir Richard Child* (London, 1712), p. 5; J. Harris, *Leighton-Stone Air: A Poem, or a Poetical Encomium on the Excellency of its SOIL, Healthy AIR and Beauteous Situation* (London, 1702), p.5.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Getty Library, H. Repton, *Proposals for Improvements at Wanstead* (1813), p.6.

<sup>26</sup> BNF CVE 39280, lot no.117, p.32.

<sup>27</sup> J. Stobart, "'So agreeable and suitable a place'" The Character, Use and Provisioning of a Late Eighteenth-Century Suburban Villa', *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 39,

meant, arguably, that there was greater pressure to demonstrate an exemplary level of hospitality, justifying its vastness, opulence and political influence. The various sources used throughout this dissertation highlight Wanstead's role as a public arena, how its owners engaged with sociability in order to maintain their status, as well as the effects which the practices of sociability had upon the design of the estate, particularly the surrounding landscape. Wanstead's demolition therefore erased a hugely significant seat, where the forms of sociability and hospitality expected at a more distant country house were performed close to London. This draws our attention, once again, to a recurring theme of this dissertation: the significance of geographical location.

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Architectural historian, Martin Locock, has drawn our attention to the necessary framing of any research project by the issues important to the researcher, and the sources of evidence available at the time of the study.<sup>28</sup> This study has covered many aspects of the history of Wanstead over the long eighteenth century, concentrating on positioning this property within broader contexts, and I hope it can open up new, future avenues of research for this property, as well as other lost country houses. Due to time constraints, certain topics of interest had to be side lined in order to maintain the focus of this

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No. 1 (March 2016), pp. 89-102. See also: D. Gerhold, 'London's Suburban Villas and Mansions, 1600-1830', *The London Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2009), pp.250-52.

<sup>28</sup> M. Locock, 'Meaningful Architecture' in M. Locock ed., *Meaningful Architecture: Social Interpretations of Buildings* (Avebury, 1994), p.7.

study, but an exploration of the topics outlined below would further enrich our understanding of the estate.

First and foremost, a closer examination of the town houses acquired by the Tylney family throughout the long eighteenth century would be advantageous to understanding the roles which Wanstead played during this period. The relationship between the town and country house was a highly significant one during the eighteenth century. Rachel Stewart notes that studies of the town house are critical to gaining a full understanding of the country house, and of the lives and values of the people who moved between the two.<sup>29</sup>

My research uncovered some details of town houses based in Soho Square, Hanover Street and Covent Garden, confirming Richard Child's position within the elite Whig network based within these districts of London.<sup>30</sup> Richard's employment of Colen Campbell and William Kent was likely to have been a result of this Whig network, facilitated by the close proximity of their London residences. Connections established in the city could drive the development of a family seat situated outside London, and prove crucial for its design. But Child's employment of these two emerging and relatively inexperienced designers contradicts the widely held opinion that the newly moneyed tended to imitate their social superiors.<sup>31</sup> Instead, the creation of Wanstead was testament to the success of a newly acquired fortune, showing

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<sup>29</sup> R. Stewart, *The London Town House in Georgian London* (New Haven and London, 2009), p.17.

<sup>30</sup> J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (London and New Haven, 1945) p.91.

<sup>31</sup> L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540- 1880* (Oxford, 1984), p.29.

the 'nouveau riche' setting trends that other members of the elite then adopted. The eighteenth-century estate can thus, to an extent, be viewed as a product of fashions and sensibilities that emerged from the metropolis during this period. Whilst Wanstead's proximity to the city has been a subject of interest throughout this dissertation, an investigation into the Tylney town houses would allow the future historian of Wanstead to further consider the extent to which city life affected its development, perhaps, for example, through the acquisition of furnishings, art works and other material goods in the city.

A study of the town house could also help to establish the amount of time the family spent in London, in comparison to Wanstead. In 1771, a correspondent to the *Town and Country Magazine* complained about how frequently owners of country houses were absent from their estates; 'how greatly I am mortified to find that scarce one in twenty is inhabited! 'Does my lord reside here constantly?' 'No Sir, he has not been here these four years.' Such is the customary answer.'<sup>32</sup> The increasing popularity of longer periods spent in London, rather than the remoter country estate, was often criticised. However, with a property situated so close to the city, would any preference for the town house over the 'country seat' be as strong for the Childs? Measuring the movement between Wanstead and London would therefore make a valuable contribution, not only to the history of Wanstead and its role, but also to studies of the Georgian London town house more broadly.

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<sup>32</sup> Agrippus, 'Reflections on seeing Lord Tylney's House', *Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 3 (1771), p.429.



This could be particularly valuable when comparing the Tylney town house properties with those belonging to other members of elite society. Landed families with remote country seats had, presumably, particular need to ensure that their properties in London conveyed a level of grandeur which well represented the family's fortunes. Properties such as Norfolk House (1722), Devonshire House (c. 1740) and Spencer House (1756), were built for members of the landed elite whose family seats were a considerable distance from the metropolis. Such residences could serve as 'ambassadors' to the more distant estates. Perhaps the proximity of Wanstead reduced the need for the Tylney town houses to function in this way. There is no evidence to suggest that the London residences of this family during the eighteenth century were anything like as grand as Wanstead. Unfortunately, the site of Child's house at no. 20 Soho Square is now occupied by a modern office block, its former architectural shell having been demolished in 1924 (fig. 174). Moreover, a sale catalogue produced after Richard Child, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Tylney's death, to auction off the contents of his town house in Soho Square on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1751 remains untraced.<sup>33</sup> Such evidence would, however, provide an example of how the house was furnished and help to establish the relationship between the London residence and Wanstead.

A second area worthy of further research is the role of women at the estate. The reader of this dissertation will have noticed that, out of the five ownerships discussed, only one concerns a female member of the family. Catherine's ownership occurred in the early nineteenth century and, whilst a

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<sup>33</sup> *London Daily Advertiser & Literary Gazette*, 22 October 1751.

range of evidence provides invaluable details about her inheritance, governance and involvement in design improvements at Wanstead, it has not been possible to uncover evidence regarding earlier female residents. Although there were relatively few prominent women in the family earlier in the period under scrutiny, further investigation into the roles of wives and daughters would certainly be worthwhile. Dana Arnold and Judith Lewis have pointed to neglect of the subject of women and the country house, which can marginalise their contributions.<sup>34</sup> However, the kind of evidence used by Amanda Vickery in her study of household accounts during the Georgian period, which demonstrates that management of these accounts was often a female occupation amongst the genteel and aristocratic classes, has not come to light during my research into Wanstead.<sup>35</sup> Were such evidence to surface, historians could gain insight into the relationships between husbands and wives in this family, and the extent to which female residents engaged with administration, management and developments.

Evidence of household accounts would also be valuable for discussions of William and Catherine's ownership, particularly with regards to Catherine's control over the property as heiress, and her input into the improvement schemes undertaken during this period. If Catherine was proven to be responsible for managing the household accounts, even if under the

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<sup>34</sup> J.S Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 2009), pp.336-363; D. Arnold, 'Defining Femininity: Women and the Country House' in *The Georgian Country House* ed., D. Arnold (Sutton, 1998), p.79

<sup>35</sup> A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London and New Haven, 2009), pp.106-128.

supervision of her husband, then it would show that William and Catherine shared responsibility for the demise of Wanstead, challenging the myth of “wicked William”.

Further research into spaces of the house not focused on in this dissertation would also be beneficial. I have concentrated on the three principal rooms of Wanstead - the great hall, the ballroom and the saloon - because this is where the majority of evidence, currently recoverable, lies. However, the experience of reading through the 1795 inventory and the 1822 sale catalogues awakens curiosity about each room which the owners of Wanstead furnished, and how they were used. The time and word constraints of this study did not allow for detailed attention to a wider range of rooms, but deeper research into lesser-known spaces in the house would certainly benefit our overall understanding of Wanstead.

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Any study of Wanstead is, above all, hampered by the absence of its architectural fabric. No sale catalogue for the dispersal of its building material in 1824 has been traced so far, making it difficult to determine where particular features went, and which buildings they were incorporated into.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Thanks to a discussion with Joanna Brogan at the National Art Library for her assistance in trying to trace this sale catalogue. John Harris comments on the rarity of demolition auction catalogues, stating that the catalogues of Canons, Middlesex (1747), Fonthill House, Wiltshire (1807) and Eythorpe House, Buckinghamshire (1810) are the only three known to survive. See: J. Harris, *Moving Rooms: The Trade in Architectural Salvage* (London and New Haven, 2007), p.15.

However, the experience of encountering even a small percentage of Wanstead's building fabric in Cambridge is stimulating, aiding a more physical sense of the experience of the rooms of the house, beyond that which can be achieved through the study of two-dimensional visual and textual sources alone (figs 15-18).<sup>37</sup>

The absence of Wanstead's architecture means that it is a space in danger of becoming subject to a more 'romantic' historical imagination. Architectural historian, W. H. Walsh, has cautioned that, when historical evidence is no longer accessible to direct inspection, inspired guesses, or fictions can result.<sup>38</sup> Rudolf Arnheim has also argued that full perception of space can only occur in the presence of tangible things, the experience of buildings being the product of 'the senses of sight and sound, of touch and heat and cold and muscular behaviour, as well as of the resultant thoughts and strivings'.<sup>39</sup> Arnheim's argument indicates that we can never gain a full understanding of Wanstead, as we are unable to engage with it through our senses. Furthermore, John Harris, in his study of architectural salvage, notes that it is difficult to remove a room from a building in its entirety, and that fixtures and fittings usually have to be manipulated to fit a new site, and a different architectural context.<sup>40</sup> Certainly, the incorporation of fabric from Wanstead into the site at Hills Road, Cambridge, a significantly smaller property, required adaptation of the original architectural forms. The iron balustrade, for

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<sup>37</sup> A.P Baggs, 'The after-life of Wanstead', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. 5 (1996), pp.131-133.

<sup>38</sup> W. H Walsh, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (London, 1958), pp.19-20.

<sup>39</sup> R. Arnheim, *Dynamics of Architectural Form* (Berkeley, 2009), p.4.

<sup>40</sup> Harris, *Moving Rooms*, p.3.

example, was reduced in order to fit into the staircase of its new home (fig. 15). The sense of coming close to Wanstead on encountering this feature, thus, is deeply problematic.<sup>41</sup>

However, recovering a lost house should also be seen as an invigorating and productive challenge, opening up new avenues of research, encouraging us to reflect upon the role of historic architectural spaces in interpretation within our approach to studies of the country house. Dana Arnold has argued that, even though an exterior may remain unaltered, architecture changes its function as it meets the different demands of different occupants, meanings shifting along with circumstances and contexts.<sup>42</sup> Locock has similarly discussed the changing meanings of architecture, pointing out that material culture is affected by its surroundings and thus there is no reason to presume that one building can have a singular meaning.<sup>43</sup> The variety of functions and meanings therefore suggests that even a surviving architectural shell is an unstable entity that does not necessarily provide a more straightforward history than one which has been demolished.

This is particularly notable when considering the English country house during the early twentieth century.<sup>44</sup> For example, it is widely known that country houses such as Holkham Hall in Norfolk, situated far from bombing,

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<sup>41</sup> Baggs, 'The after-life of Wanstead', pp.131-133.

<sup>42</sup> D. Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p.7.

<sup>43</sup> Locock, 'Meaningful Architecture', pp.4-5.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the English country house during the interwar years see: P. Mandler, 'Land without Lords: The Nadir of the Country House', in *The Rise and Fall of the Stately Home* (London and New Haven, 2009), pp.225-263.

were requisitioned during World War II to accommodate evacuees and army operations. Meanwhile, Chatsworth, Longleat and Castle Howard were amongst a number that temporarily became schools. Others were used to store national art collections.<sup>45</sup> Peter Mandler has commented that, as a result, the larger houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were almost completely emptied of their original meanings.<sup>46</sup> The significance of houses is a product of society's relationship with those properties at any given time, and so the meanings of buildings frequently change.<sup>47</sup> The work of scholars such as Arnold, Locock and Matthew Johnson brings us to a crucial aspect of Wanstead's history. The demolition of the estate means that the house and its grounds did not endure through later centuries, and so were not affected by changing social values or requirements.

Surviving, restored or maintained country-house interiors are typically frozen at a moment in their history deemed especially important. This can sit in tension with the nature of these properties as continually evolving, inhabited spaces, providing visitors instead with an experience of a certain period selected by the curators or owners. In 2014, Kenwood House in north London was restored to its original eighteenth-century appearance, when Robert Adam carried out an extensive scheme for the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Mansfield between 1767 and 1770.<sup>48</sup> A six million pound project was undertaken to remove the Victorian

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<sup>45</sup> H. Miers, *A Report on the Public Museums of the British Isles* (Edinburgh, 1928), p.25.

<sup>46</sup> Mandler, 'Land without Lords', p.254.

<sup>47</sup> M. Johnson, *Housing Culture: Traditional Architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993), p.12.

<sup>48</sup> G. Waterfield, 'Kenwood House', *Apollo Magazine*, No.617 (2014), pp.77-79.

furnishings that had more recently occupied the space.<sup>49</sup> Whilst the house now presents itself as a more authentic version of its eighteenth-century structure, it no longer provides visual evidence of later developments at Kenwood: those that occurred within the eighteenth-century shell under the ownership of later tenants such as Grand Duke Michael, Tsar Nicholas II's cousin; Edward Cecil Guinness, Earl of Iveagh and a millionaire widow of an American tin manufacturer. Upon reopening, Alastair Smart reported; 'the intention is clear: to make Kenwood feel less like a museum and more like a home again'.<sup>50</sup> This is certainly true, but those nineteenth and twentieth-century developments were all part of Kenwood's history, and an inevitable part of the life of such a house. Therefore, whilst the restoration is impressive, and invaluable for studies of the eighteenth-century interior, a significant part of Kenwood's later history has been erased.

At Wanstead, this issue does not exist. Wanstead's demolition in 1824 means its history is fully contained within the Georgian period. Moreover, the dispersal of its contents and building fabric as well as the disintegration of its landscape means we simply do not have the means to freeze the estate in a particular moment in time. If it had survived, then it seems likely the estate would have been taken back to the time of Richard Child's ownership in any restoration project. Instead, the process of piecing together Wanstead's lost history encourages us to explore a range of ownerships and improvements that

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<sup>49</sup> A. Smart, 'Kenwood House: A restored Neoclassic', *The Telegraph* [www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/10479088/Kenwood-House-A-restored-Neoclassic.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/10479088/Kenwood-House-A-restored-Neoclassic.html), accessed 15 April 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Smart, 'Kenwood House'.

occurred throughout the Georgian period, thus creating a highly effective case study of the eighteenth-century estate, its mutability, and the quiet as well as the lively periods in its history.

Overall, a study of such a lost estate raises two key issues. On the one hand, any such research faces critical limitations. Available sources have to be cross-examined, and with particular care, as I explored in my introduction. However, on the other, work on such a destroyed property forces the historian to closely engage with a wide range of material evidence that may not have been given the same degree of attention had the property survived.

Further, this study of Wanstead has addressed the consequences of financial debt amongst landowners in a way not generally invited by success stories; by houses which have endured and survived through the centuries. Certainly, the demise of a family and their estate usually means that much of the administrative paperwork is destroyed. Evidence of Wanstead's financial struggles therefore has to be found in bank ledgers, correspondence, newspaper accounts, sales catalogues and satirical cartoons. These sources provide insight into the difficulties of eighteenth-century estate management. Moreover, an extant property would not have been subject to such major sales of its contents as Wanstead; sales which provide particularly valuable and detailed evidence for the location of particular furnishings, and when they were moved or replaced.



The loss of Wanstead also opens up a range of exciting possibilities for future projects and historical research. Whilst deeply valued by the local community and those familiar with its rich history, the Wanstead site continues to be overlooked more broadly. Its landscape, currently listed as a Grade II site under Historic England's 'At Risk' register, is suffering considerably.<sup>51</sup> The eighteenth-century lakes, particularly the Ornamental Waters and the Herony Pond, are leaking. This situation has been worsened by the growth of trees and shrubs alongside the lakes, thought to have penetrated into their early nineteenth-century clay linings. The condition of the monuments in the landscape is variable. Dr. Rob Wiseman's scans showed the original form of the islands to be intact, but they are obscured from view, currently buried beneath undergrowth (fig. 112). Likewise the amphitheatre survives beneath vegetation, but is reportedly in danger in its boggy location (fig. 175). Since a fire in 1884, the grotto-boathouse has fallen prey to petty vandalism (fig. 11). Efforts to clear away the damage on the monument, together with the overgrowth, have failed, despite the structure being Grade II listed since 1954.<sup>52</sup>

There are, however, surviving features that still hint at the earlier magnificence of the site. The original iron-wrought fencing which surrounds the Wanstead golf club house, occupying former outbuildings, and the crater at the first tee on the Wanstead golf course where the house once stood, has

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<sup>51</sup> Z. Mellor, 'Wanstead Park E11, Redbridge', Historic England Online <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/1314015>, accessed 21 April 2016. Hereafter HEO.

<sup>52</sup> 'The Grotto: List Entry Summary', HEO, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1183624>, accessed 21 April 2016.

been well maintained (figs 5 and 10). Standing with our back to the central canal, we can still look down the lengthy avenue that originally led the eighteenth-century visitor's eye to what Shaw described as 'one of the most beautiful and magnificent private houses in Europe' (fig. 8).<sup>53</sup> Wanstead sorely needs further protection, and to undergo the kinds of preservation and restoration work from which other sites have recently benefitted. Notable amongst these is Painshill Park in Cobham, granted money from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the eighteenth-century crystal grotto and other features such as the ruined abbey, the gothic tower, the gothic temple, the Turkish tent, the five arch bridge and Charles Hamilton's long lake vista (figs 176-178). Given the wealth of evidence pulled together in this dissertation, it would clearly be feasible for such work to likewise be carried out at Wanstead.

Furthermore, although the eighteenth-century Wanstead estate is now largely lost from sight, the wide range of surviving material evidence that has been drawn on throughout this dissertation, such as paintings, maps, visitor accounts, architectural plans and architectural fabric, could potentially be used for producing digital reconstructions. These would greatly enhance the findings of this dissertation. Digitally constructed images of the interiors of this property could allow for viewing its appearance at various moments in time, drawing attention to shifts in taste throughout particular periods, and highlighting the lengthy and on-going processes by which such a house was designed and maintained.

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<sup>53</sup> Shaw, *Tour to the West of England*, p.28.

Such a technique could also be applied to the reconstruction of the eighteenth-century landscape. Choosing which aspect of a historical landscape to preserve and present to modern day visitors is a challenging task. Estate landscapes were, as this study of Wanstead has demonstrated, subject to frequent change as owners attempted to comply with ever-changing views of how such grounds should look, and their meanings. Wanstead's landscape is associated with seminal designers, such as George London and Henry Wise, Charles Bridgeman, William Kent and Humphry Repton - but, if one was able actually to restore the landscape, how would one choose between these important periods of design? Digital reconstructions of the landscape could be highly valuable, engaging with the various layouts and features that took shape between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. It would no doubt be a process from which other surviving estate landscapes could also benefit.

One digital reconstruction was carried out in 2009 by T-Space, an architectural firm based in the local area (figs 179 and 180). T-Space was commissioned by the Friends of Wanstead Park Society to create a digital reconstruction of the grotto.<sup>54</sup> This is amongst the most straightforward features of the estate to recreate, primarily because its structural frame remains partially intact. The reconstruction relied upon the key sources referred to in chapter four, such as Charles Heathcote Tatham's sketches made in 1822 (fig. 117), which include a plan and section, as well as mark the location of the various entrance points, and Samuel Curwen's description of

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<sup>54</sup> Special thanks to Jarek Blyskal at T-Space, Wanstead for taking the time to show me the process of redesigning the grotto, and sharing images and material with me.

the grotto in 1775. Various images of the grotto from different perspectives were produced, as well as a video, which guided the viewer into the structure. Although this reconstruction did not reproduce the splendour of the interior, it did provide a sense of the layout and spaces, which, today, in the absence of the different floor levels and surrounding walls, is difficult to achieve.

A more generous budget and timeframe would perhaps have allowed for the reconstruction of the interior of the grotto; that described in the period as covered in ‘shells, stones and petrified substances’.<sup>55</sup> Although Tatham’s sketches do not depict the grotto in detail, a photograph of the interior taken in 1884 would be useful, as well as comparative studies of other grottos such as that recently reconstructed at Painshill (figs 181 and 120).<sup>56</sup> The production of a more detailed digital reproduction of the grotto boathouse would greatly enhance our understanding of its appearance, and the purposes which it served in the park.

During this study of Wanstead, I made preliminary attempts to create a digital reconstruction of Wanstead’s architectural fabric (fig. 182).<sup>57</sup> This involved using Campbell’s original plans and various pictorial sources to produce three-dimensional views of the exterior, which the viewer could move around. The intention was to provide something of the experience of viewing and navigating the grounds of Wanstead. However, this underscored the various

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<sup>55</sup> J. Harris, ‘Wanstead’s Compelling Vista’, *Country Life Magazine*, Vol. 22 (22 August 1991), p.62.

<sup>56</sup> For photographic evidence see: Dawson, *Story of Wanstead Park*.

<sup>57</sup> Special thanks to Justin Vanson for his efforts to piece together the wide range of material evidence I provided him to recreate a three-dimensional view of Wanstead House’s façade.

and partial nature of visual images of Wanstead and, whilst Campbell's second design for Wanstead (fig. 2) and views such as Philip Streatham's watercolour from 1771 (fig. 183) are confirmed by visitor descriptions, there is still considerable difficulty in establishing the appearance of specific architectural details, such as window frames, doors, chimneys and the frieze which adorned the portico. This is mainly because most views depicting Wanstead House are taken from the same perspective, facing the front façade, and at a distance in order to provide views of the surrounding landscape. Throughout my research, I was only able to identify three views depicting the rear of the property; George Robertson's view of Wanstead in 1781 (fig. 184), the anonymous view, previously attributed to Catton, which remains untraced in a private collection (fig. 38) and a print published in 1818, which depicts the rear staircase descending from the saloon in a curved formation (fig. 185). Campbell's designs for Wanstead in volume one of *Vitruvius Britannicus* show a curved staircase in the first design, and a straight staircase in the second (figs 68 and 69). Aside from these, no other views depict the east front of Wanstead, and nor do any visitor descriptions provide the necessary information. Likewise, little evidence survives regarding the north and south sides of the house. Whilst comparison to other houses by Campbell can help to identify common styles and motifs in his finer architectural details, such as window surrounds and doors, the lack of visual evidence makes it difficult to recreate a three-dimensional view of the exterior of Wanstead House with any precision.

This said, a number of recent collaborations between digital and historical research teams have shown that these can enliven the past in new and exciting ways. The digital centre at the University of York for example, is undertaking a number of digital heritage projects, which includes work on Basing House, a former Tudor palace which once rivalled Hampton Court, and other reconstructions of ecclesiastical buildings.<sup>58</sup> Christopher Maxwell's PhD thesis on the dispersal of Hamilton Palace contributed to a wider project, formed in association with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, to virtually recreate the house and its collection.<sup>59</sup> The project digitised inventories of the Hamilton art collection between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as producing an interactive view of the landscape and the long gallery, which included identifiable paintings and furniture. A three-dimensional model of the house was also produced using floor plans dating from 1921, architectural drawings and a series of photographs taken in 1896.<sup>60</sup> Although Wanstead was demolished prior to the introduction of photography in Britain, there is a sufficient amount of similar evidence that could be used to create a three-dimensional model of the interior and provide a similar resource.

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<sup>58</sup> Thanks to Gareth Beale at Digital Heritage, University of York, for a discussion regarding projects undertaken by the team, and James Legard at The National Gallery.

<sup>59</sup> C. Maxwell, *The dispersal of the Hamilton Place collection* (University of Glasgow, 2014).

<sup>60</sup> Due to funding restrictions this project has recently been put on hold, but further bids for funding have been made. Views of the digital recreations that have so far been produced can be viewed on the Virtual Hamilton Trust Project website: <http://www.vhpt.org/>. Thanks to a discussion with Christopher Maxwell about this project.

As yet, there has been no attempt fully to recreate an eighteenth-century country house using sources such as those drawn on throughout this dissertation. Whilst the concept of digitally recreating the principal rooms and landscape of Wanstead House was highly appealing, the time constraints of the PhD proved too limited. It is, however, an achievable goal, within the limits discussed above, and could lead further research down fascinating new avenues.

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This dissertation has contributed to the history of the English eighteenth-century country house, particularly exploring the role of the newly moneyed elite. It has pulled out significant themes around geographical situation, social status, estate management and the need to ‘animate’ the eighteenth-century estate in order to enhance historical interpretations of such sites, extant or demolished. Wanstead’s demolition is frustrating, but it does also provide opportunities. Due to its destruction, Wanstead has not been subject to later alterations, its history situated entirely within the Georgian period. Its fate also sheds light on the difficulties of managing such a palatial estate and the consequences that poor management could have for families and their properties.

This dissertation also illustrates the benefits of a study which forces the historian to fully engage with and cross-examine a wide range of rich material evidence. Most importantly, it draws attention to the fact that houses that are

lost in actuality should by no means be as lost to academia as they are currently. They can open up historical debate, enrich critical analysis and challenge contemporary perceptions of the eighteenth-century estate. Above all, this study of Wanstead has presented a methodology and research results which not only enhance our historical understanding of Wanstead, but which, hopefully, are also potentially of benefit for work on many more eighteenth-century estates.



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